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THE  
R U I N S  
  
AVONDALE PRIORY.

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CHAP. I.

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**I**N a very bleak evening towards the close of a very severe December, Basil Carr, an industrious basket-maker, returning from a neighbouring market, to gladden his wife and numerous family with the produce of the preceding week's cheerful labours, was overtaken by a violent storm at the entrance of an extensive forest, through which he had to pass

before he could reach his cottage; finding it impossible to proceed, from a strong wind drifting the snow full in his face, he hastened for shelter to a sheep-cot, at no great distance, and alighting from his poor mare, that had been a faithful servant and sharer of his toilsome fortunes for many years, he gave the poor wearied beast a handful of hay, and seating himself under the shed, determined to wait patiently until the fury of the tempest subsided, and allowed him to rejoin his fond expecting family: He had been but a few minutes in the situation described, when the most piercing cries struck his ear; starting from his shelter, an impulse of humanity was bearing him to the road he had quitted, when thinking it might be the lowing of cattle on an adjacent common, or the bleating of scattered sheep through the forest, he was returning, when the shrieks were repeated, and during a momentary pause in the howling blast, he plainly distinguished the words—murder—save—spare the infants.

Basil Carr possessed all the kindly feelings of humanity; though rude and untutored, his heart felt the mild influence of heaven-born compassion, and heedless of self, as thoughtless of safety, he flew through the storm where the voice of suffering directed his steps: On regaining the road he beheld a carriage, from which a man had forcibly dragged a young female, she lay extended on the earth, deprived of sense and motion; two infants were crying beside her, and the savage ruffian busily employed stripping the poor insensible, while the postillion, an accessory in the robbery, remained on his horse, and as Basil approached them exclaimed, "quick, quick, I hear a foot!" The villain would have fled, but was prevented by the strong oaken towel of the cottager, which levelled him with the ground: The driver, apprehensive of sharing the same fate, or, what was more to be dreaded, secured and brought to justice, turned accuser, and pleading inability, from want of arms, to defend the lady, dismounted and assisted in raising her.

Basil Carr, though convinced of the postillion's dissimulation and guilt, deemed it most prudent to pretend a belief of his tale, and accept his offered aid, but learning that the chaise was engaged to go ten miles farther, and being unwilling to trust the poor woman and her children to the mercy of such an unprincipled wretch, representing her enfeebled condition, the bad roads, and the storm, which indeed continued with increasing violence, he urged him to drive round the forest, and rest at his little cottage for the night, instead of pursuing the intended route.

With a repressed yet visible reluctance the postillion acquiesced, the lady and children were replaced in the carriage, Basil remounted his mare, and in the happy consciousness of having probably preserved three fellow creatures, bid defiance to the pelting storm, and conducted them in perfect safety to his own humble habitation.

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Upon their arrival, the door was opened by a clean modest looking woman, who welcomed the return of Basil with a smiling countenance, and though certainly much astonished to see him accompanied by a lady, pale as the image of death, and two young children, on receiving a hint of their condition, respectfully supported her into a small inner chamber and laid her on a bed perfectly clean and neat, when observing her to look anxiously around, and the feelings of a mother giving that look a meaning, in the kindest accents she promised to feed and compose the little ones to rest.

The stranger, though restored to some degree of sense and recollection, was unable to articulate a single word, but the soft pressure of her hand, and sweet expression of her eyes when Agnes, the wife of Basil, laid the sleeping infants by her side, demonstrated more unaffected gratitude than ten thousand professions could have conveyed.

Agnes had very lately lain in, and with the remainder of some wine procured for that occasion, a bowl of whey was instantly made, and administered with an affectionate frankness which declared it given with perfect good will; having taken it she soon sunk into a quiet slumber, and next morning, though languid and weak, was able to rise and join her humble friends at their early frugal repast.

This family consisted of Basil, his wife, and five children, the mother of Agnes also resided with them, but so melancholy, perverse, peevish, and discontented, was her disposition, that she threw a gloom over the cheerfulness of the honest cottagers, that nothing but the duty of an affectionate daughter could have endured; good and complying as was the nature of Basil Carr, he was often irritated, and from prudential motives alone restrained resentment: His mother-in-law had lived many years a favorite domestic in the family of a nobleman, and had realized a considerable sum; the Earl she served, and his immediate descendants

descendants were long since deceased, but she was still honored with the notice of the surviving branches of the illustrious house ; avarice was the governing passion of this woman, and the accumulation of wealth had ever been her darling study, yet painfully conscious that the hour approached in which she would be obliged to visit that land where all things are forgotten, and where wealth could claim no privilege above the poorest, she resolved to spend the evening of her days with the wife of Basil Carr, her only surviving child ; for, added to the natural affection she felt as a parent, she knew none who would so passively submit to the infirmities of age and the caprices of habitual ill humour, as those who were attached from the ties of nature and looked up with the hopes of future advantages : Of all Basil's children the eldest girl, who was her god-daughter, was her favorite, and the promised heiress of her wealth, yet these distinctions procured her but little preference with her parents, and subjected

her to many taunts from her brothers and sisters.

Such was the family assembled round the table of Basil Carr to breakfast, when the lady entered, and in the sweetest voice imaginable, offered acknowledgments for his humane assistance in the moment of danger and distress, and the kind attentions she had received since.

“I am concerned, my benevolent friends,” continued she, “that I feel my power so unequal to my wishes in rewarding your generous services, for your preservation of these infants, my brother and sister; my gratitude is unbounded, heaven will register the deed, and on some future hour I trust they will possess the happy ability to evince a sense, and reward your goodness, when—perhaps —”

Here her voice faltered, and the poor cottagers affected even to tears, entreated she would say no more, for that indeed their hearts could not bear it. Indeed so sweetly melancholy

choly was her look, and so plaintive her voice, that even the mother appeared moved, and with an accent unusually kind offered her own arm chair by the fire, requested she would try and forget the past, and only direct them how they could contribute to her future convenience and comfort.

The stranger soon recovering her composure, in a very simple yet interesting manner informed them, that she was an orphan, left with the care of her brother and sister, that until the return of a near relation, expected from the West Indies in a few months, retirement was her only wish, the more secluded the more agreeable; that she had sufficient funds for every necessary expence, and that if their little hospitable dwelling could accommodate her, she should feel truly satisfied under such worthy protection; entreated their pardon if her wish had in the least embarrassed them, and if the proposal did not perfectly suit their convenience, she must yet intrude on their goodness so far as to entreat

they would direct her to some safe and decent retirement; with that view she had quitted London, and was proceeding to the village of Newnham, being informed she could there find accommodations, when a fellow who had observed her change a note at the Inn, where the chaise was hired, stopt it and demanded her money, terror deprived her of the power of action, the ruffian dragged her to the earth, and while clasping the children in her arms, she uttered those piercing cries which so providentially reached the ear of honest Basil Carr and brought him to her assistance.

Having finished her short narrative she repeated her wish to remain with them, yet hoped they would speak with freedom, consult their own conscience, and then have the kindness to direct a stranger, who relied with much confidence on their experienced goodness.

With a sincerity which appeared legible on the honest countenance of Basil, he replied,  
that

that he should be very happy if his poor cottage could afford her accommodation, but his wife and her mother knew best.

Contrary to the expectation of all, Mrs. Harrop (the mother of Agnes) offered no objection, and Agnes declared she should feel quite pleased if the lady could put up with the chamber she lay in last night; their fare, she added, was poor, and very simple, but should be always clean, and served with neatness; and nothing on her part should be neglected to render it agreeable.

A glow of satisfaction enlivened the lovely face of the fair stranger, as she declared herself more than contented, and obliged beyond expression by their ready compliance; pecuniary matters were easily adjusted between the parties, a little plan for future convenience arranged, and in a few hours Miss Barry, (the stranger's name) and her infant charge, were put in quiet and full possession of the vacant apartment.

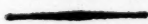
That this chamber was unoccupied, or indeed in the cottage at all, was owing to Mrs. Harrop; upon her intimating a wish to reside with her daughter, in compliment to her it had not only been built, but furnished in a manner very superior to the other parts of the little tenement; the prospect from the casement was beautiful, grand, and extensive beyond description, it commanded a full view of the magnificent ruins of an ancient Priory, and a noble gothic chapel, under which were vaults that contained the sacred relicts of an illustrious family. Thus an advantage which would have conveyed a contemplative pleasure to a sensible well cultivated mind, afforded matter of terror and disgust to the weak and superstitious Mrs. Harrop; she had occupied the apartment but a few nights, when she protested the dismal moaning that issued from the old monkish tombs disturbed her repose, and the fearful sights that glided in an evening among the ruins would turn her brain, and unless they would remove her to a part of the cottage where she could neither hear  
groans,

groans, nor behold the ruins and their discontented spirits, she must seek friends and lodging elsewhere.

In consequence of this declaration, a large apartment, but very remote from this pleasant chamber, and which had served them as a granary, was converted into a sleeping-room, and with that the mother was contented, or chose to appear satisfied; yet so powerful is superstition over a weak uncultivated mind, that poor Agnes, after the close of day, would never venture into the dreaded chamber, nor so much as glance at the ruins even when the sun shone with meridian splendor lest her eyes should encounter some horrible apparition, and to these circumstances alone was Miss Barry indebted for the accommodation that Basil Carr's cottage afforded.



## CHAP. II.



NOTHING could be more sweetly romantic than the situation of the cottage, in which the fair unknown had become an inhabitant. It stood upon a gentle eminence in the bosom of a beautiful hanging wood; the landscape in front was enriched with variegated pasture, interspersed in some parts with large sheets of water, and in others the most transparent rivulets, on the banks of which grew in wild and luxuriant beauty the drooping willows, that furnished the industrious Basil with materials for his basket-work: Behind, the eye was delighted with an extensive view of the spacious park belonging to Avondale

Avondale Castle, which rose in Gothic grandeur at some miles distance; on the right appeared a vast forest, the lofty trees seeming with towering pride to lose themselves in the clouds; on the left, in a deep valley, lay the ruins of the ancient Priory already mentioned, and beyond them a large tract of country, gratifying the sight with a pleasing variety of objects: In short, the surrounding scenery, in every point of view, was perfectly adapted to charm a glowing imagination, and amuse a cheerful fancy. It could not then be wondered that Miss Barry, ever an enthusiastic admirer of the rude beauty of simple nature, should be delighted with this picturesque solitude.

A nearer and longer acquaintance with the honest cottagers afforded Miss Barry no reason to retract her first sentiments in favor of Basil's principles and humanity; she found him honest, good natured, humble, and compassionate; his wife kindly in temper, mild in her manners, simple and unassuming; the mother

mother seldom appeared, except at meals, when little conversation passed, her presence generally inspiring an uneasy restraint among the whole.

For a little time the dignity of Miss Barry's appearance, with the superiority of her manners, awed her humble friends to silence and ceremonious distance, their respect being tinged with fear, they conversed with timidity, and shrunk from her attempted freedom until the smiles of complacency beaming on her beautiful countenance, and a winning affability which distinguished every word and action encouraged their familiarity; dispelled the idea of superior advantages, and soon established a mutual harmony and contentment; they treated her with deference and attention, without ceremony, and she endeared herself so much to them by many kind offices, that they soon considered her as a being necessary to their happiness and welfare. She assisted and directed Agnes in several domestic matters, taught the elder children

dren to read and work, and from the refuse of her own wardrobe decently attired the little ones.

Her brother Athwold, and sister Ethelinde, were as yet too young to receive any instruction, and she felt a pleasing gratification in benefiting the children of her friends, at the same time that it beguiled the wintry hours of half their heaviness, and varied her own amusements, which were chiefly reading and writing, though she neither sent or received letters, except one she commissioned Basil to put in the post office on her first arrival. She commonly assumed a smiling cheerfulness, but it was only *assumed*, for too often the tear of sorrow would hang on a cheek which appeared to have lost many shades of its charming bloom; she was languid and depressed, and, in secret, breathed the sigh of melancholy remembrance.

In this manner passed the dreary hours of a severe winter; the snow lying deep on the  
ground

ground precluded every attempt to wander through the woods, so that her walks had never extended beyond the garden and orchard adjoining the cottage, except once that she accompanied Agnes to a village church, but the ungraceful delivery, and uninteresting discourse of the clergyman discouraged her from ever repeating her attendance, well convinced her own private devotion, breathed from a resigned and well regulated mind, was more acceptable in the sight of a righteous Creator, and that she could derive more perfect instruction from perusing the page of a sensible divine, in her own chamber.

With a degree of solicitude bordering on impatience she watched the earliest approaches of spring ; when the snow-drop, fearless of inclement storms, first reared its modest head, she contemplated the lowly plant with pleasure ; to the crocus she gave a smiling welcome, and as the vernal season advanced, diffusing its fragrant treasures, she felt her spirits revive, and a new world of  
rural

rural beauty burst on her delighted view. She would often wander to the forest, and under the shade of a spreading beech or lofty oak, indulge her pensive humour, ruminate on the circumstances of a life not uninteresting, 'till a soft melancholy enveloped every sense, and, thoughtless of time and place, the chill of evening dews would alone remind her she was near two miles from the cottage.

Sometimes she would accompany Basil to the banks of the river, and while Athwold and Ethelinde amused themselves with the other children, assisted him in twisting the slender willow for his work, 'till at length she became such a proficient, that in the more delicate parts she far excelled his nicest execution. This employment for a short time engaged her attention, but, the novelty over, it ceased to please, and her active mind sighed for avocations more suited to a refined and highly improved understanding.

One day after dinner she resolved to gratify a desire she had long felt, to examine the ruins of the Priory, and having mentioned her intention, was requesting Agnes to attend to Athwold and Ethelinde during her absence, when she was suddenly interrupted by Mrs. Harrop, who had not retired from table, exclaiming with a wild vacant stare, "going to the ruins! what would you do there? — Athwold! — Ethelinde! — who gave the children such queer heathenish names?"

Miss Barry somewhat astonished at her emotion and abrupt questions, replied, they were named for their parents.

"Do their parents live?" demanded she.

"I have told you," answered Miss Barry gravely, "that I am an orphan," and to avoid a conversation which seemed to awaken painful remembrance, she hastily quitted the cottage and bent her steps towards the Priory of Avondale.

CHAP.

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### CHAP. III.

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THE road Miss Barry now pursued was so very lonely and unfrequented that her eye was the only guide she had, and she had wandered over many pathless fields, scrambled through thick underwood, fens, and dry ditches, when almost wearied she found herself on the brink of a declivity, at the bottom of which lay the stately ruins; finding a descent nearly impossible, from the banks being overgrown with briars, thistles, and very long grass, the survey conveyed only chagrin, and she was returning with disappointment for her companion, when giving another glance to what she so much desired to inspect nearer,

nearer, she perceived under the weeds something resembling a flight of broken steps; this discovery reviving her hopes, every effort to succeed was exerted, and at length, with much assiduity and the aid of her scissars she cleared the way, and descended in perfect safety.

She entered the venerable pile impressed with a pleasing awe, and felt an indescribable reverence for every mouldering stone. Great part of the stupendous walls were still standing, and in different places small inclosures, which bore the appearance of having been formerly the cells appropriated to the privacy of monkish devotion; a magnificent range of cloisters were still entire, and having hitherto resisted the ravaging hand of all-subduing time, proclaimed with bold defiance what the structure once had been.

Towards the centre of the ruins the reflectory could easily be traced, trees planted by the hand of nature, were growing in wild luxuriance,

uriance, and bursting through various chinks afforded shelter to those melancholy birds that delight to dwell in sequestered habitations; the walls and floor were mostly covered with ivy and moss, yet in several places the remains of rich mosaic work appeared, and through the vacancies where casements once admitted cheerful light, were now darkened by the gloomy cypress, and sad unfocial yew, the ancient splendor of the building could still be retraced by the sun beams darting through the apertures in the sinking roof.

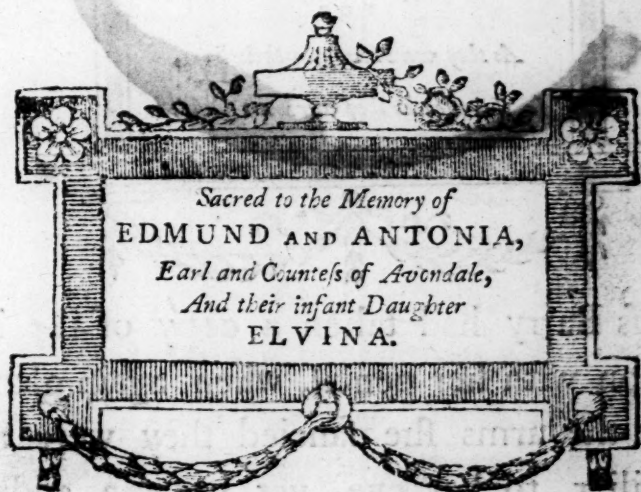
Observing little more than huge pieces of stone and marble to remain of the Priory, she proceeded to the chapel, which appeared tottering in superb decay; the grand altar, formerly a master-piece of the richest statuary, was falling to ruin; of the inscriptions, part only of the decalogue was legible, yet upon a nice and careful inspection she learned from several tombs, in the eastern aisle of the chapel, that they, inclosed the virtuous and war-like

like ancestors of the illustrious House of Avondale.

The silent state in which the poor unconscious relics were reposed, with the vain attempts of human pride, to save their memory from dark oblivion, inspired a sacred gloom, and solemn contemplation and she was meditating on the lesson of humility they taught, when in a small wing adjoining the chapel an arch erected in the Doric taste, and ornamented with unpolished fret work, attracted her notice; she hastened toward it, the interior was a low circular building, surrounded with willows, drooping to the earth, and on pedestals, under their shade, were images, representing angels, reclining in the attitude of sorrow; in the centre, supported by eight highly carved pillars, stood an oval slab, of black marble, recumbent on which lay the figures of a gentleman and lady, with a female infant, of the purest alabaster; at their feet appeared two coronets, and on a blazon, with rich armorial bearings, were the  
arms

arms of two families, quartered in different coloured marbles; the imagery at the head represented the various virtues and graces which had adorned the deceased, and endeared them to surviving kindred.

No embellishment was wanting that could render the monument superb and beautiful, the forms were large as life, and conveyed an idea of surpassing elegance, while the lovely well turned features displayed a mild expression of innocence and sorrow, which the following inscriptive lines, in gold letters beneath the arms, rather confirmed than contradicted.



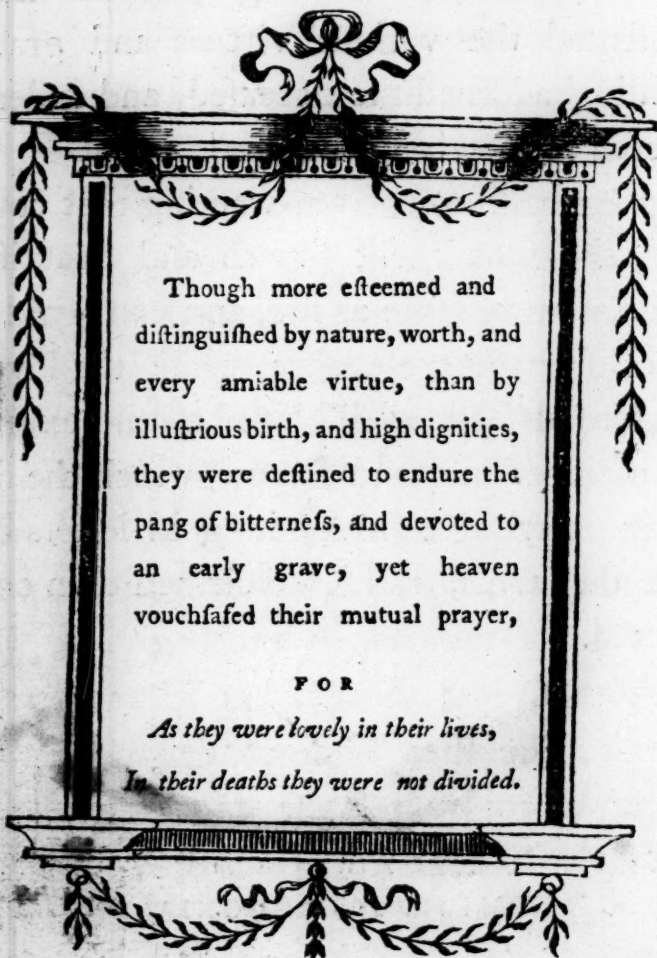
*This Monument was erected in testimony of  
Regard by a mourning Sister.*

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AND IN ANOTHER COMPARTMENT



Miss Barry had taken a copy of the inscription with her pencil, when again glancing at the arms she fancied they were not unfamiliar to her eye, yet in vain endeavoured to recollect where she had seen them,

seating

seating herself therefore pensively on a tomb; she continued gazing around the spreading ruin, and musing on the circumstances of her own destiny, softly exclaimed, "Oh! boasting grandeur, where are now thy triumphs! Ye great and vain approach this hallowed spot, here learn a lowliness of mind, and form an estimate of human excellence!" Here long she sat contemplating the fallen solitary grandeur of the ancient fabric, and lost in the depth of melancholy meditation, heeded not the passing hour until the last beams of the setting sun faintly irradiated the mouldering walls of the chapel, and the clock from a distant steeple warned her it was time to return: She then arose to depart, when a distant murmuring noise engaging her attention, awhile she stopt;—it drew nearer;—deep and repeated sighs now struck her ear, she started, listened, and distinctly heard a slow solemn step pacing through the chapel. It might be some pensive stranger like herself, —she looked around, but seeing nought save the sinking shrines and falling monuments of the long forgotten dead, was

leaving the place with a sensation something like fear throbbing at her breast, with a quick step she then hastened down the center aisle of the chapel, when happening to cast her eyes upwards she beheld a shadow gliding swiftly along an opposite gallery, which, on reaching a magnificent tomb, suddenly sunk from her view.

Almost transfixed to the spot, a moment she stood unknowing what to do, terror shook her frame; she would have shrieked, but could only gasp: At length reason interposed, when recollecting a shadow could only be reflected by some material substance, she resolved to ascend the gallery, and by following the shade, (which had reappeared and continued to glide around) be convinced that it was no more than some poor son or daughter of mortality indulging solemn sadness like herself. With a reassumed and perhaps a forced courage, she therefore quickened her pace and soon reached the stairs, but who can describe the blended horror and consternation which took possession of her mind on beholding the upper steps totally demolished, and

and every attempt to gain the gallery ineffectual. A universal tremor seized her, she leaned on the broken balustrades for support, and while her eyes continued to follow the shadow it again disappeared, and immediately a loud noise, which seemed like the closing of two heavy gates, was heard, which shook the ancient building to its centre, and sounding deep and hollow through the long deserted aisles, left a low solemn murmur whispering through the chapel.

When a little recovered from the impressions of terror and surprise, she quitted the ruins, and immersed in a variety of vague and painful conjectures, proceeded on her way home. Very few possessed a finer understanding, or more enlightened mind than Miss Barry, and though the extraordinary occurrences of the evening had considerably strengthened an idea of supernatural appearances, she resolved to frequently revisit the ruins, and either confirm her opinion of their *possibility*, or by convincing her judgment of the error, dispel the vain illusion, which, notwithstanding the recent presumptive proofs she had

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experienced, might partly be attributed to weak spirits, and the traditionary tales she had heard of the place. Fixed in this resolution, and that of remaining perfectly silent as to what she had seen, before the evening closed she arrived at her humble dwelling, to the joy of Athwold and Ethelinde, and much indeed to the satisfaction of Agnes, who had cherished a thousand superstitious fears concerning her visit to the priory.

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#### CHAP. IV.

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AS the summer advanced, Miss Barry was observed to expect letters with the most painful anxiety, and to peruse the papers and magazines which Basil brought her from the neighbouring town, regularly once a week,

with the recent preliminary proofs she had experienced,

with much solicitude. Her accustomed employments no longer could engage her attention; the little brood of poultry was unfed, the flowers unheeded; and even the lessons of Basil's children neglected; she became grave, absent, and dejected, and alone, when she believed herself unobserved by every eye, would wildly clasp Athwold and Ethelinde to her throbbing bosom, and in a voice of anguish exclaim, "Poor lost undone orphans!" So very much had the sweetness of her manners endeared her to her humble friends, that they sincerely sympathized in her unknown sufferings, and melancholy pervaded the whole cottage. Pained at depressing them with the effect of sorrows they could neither alleviate or remove, as much as possible she fled their society, and having in her various wanderings discovered a nearer and more accessible tract to the Priory, fearless of noises and shadows, made it her constant retreat; when under the gloomy shade of the cypress or weeping willow, she would rumi-

nate on her fate until her heart almost burst with the poignancy of her feelings.

She had one evening, lost in a sad variety of thought, and indifferent to the chilling dews which fell fast around her, fauntered a considerable way beyond the ruins, nor once stopt until a slow murmuring rivulet prevented her going farther; on looking around she found herself at an obscure entrance on the vast forest of Avondale.

In any other circumstances than those which claimed and occupied every thought, the highly cultivated beauty of the country on one side, and the wild magnificence of nature on the other, would have engaged her attention, but now the contemplation of self, and self interested objects, so entirely engrossed her, that bestowing a cold glance of passing approbation, she was returning, when a weak mourning voice induced her to stop, she listened, it ceased, but again returning on the breeze, she was convinced it was the accent  
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of complaint, and she hastened to that part of the forest from whence the sounds issued.

She had proceeded but a little way thro' a dark winding path, and not without a portion of fear, (for spite of distress the human mind will shrink from danger) when she discovered a female child apparently about five years old, lying on the ground and weeping bitterly: Approaching her with a voice of kindness, she demanded her name, where she lived, and how she came there? The little innocent replied, sobbing, "Bella has lost mamma! mamma has lost Bella!" "Sweet child," cried Miss Barry, raising and embracing her, "where shall we seek mamma?" She asked in vain, Bella could only make the mournful repetition, "Bella lost mamma, mamma lost Bella!" "Dear baby!" continued Miss Barry, holding her little hands and considering how she should act, "dear baby, I will guard thee to night, and to-morrow if possible restore thee to thy forrowing mother."

Thus resolved, with Bella in her arms, she was about to turn and leave the forest, when the sounds of heavy steps behind, and a stern voice, exclaiming, "Kill her! Stop her cursed yell!" made her dart into the more intricate recesses of the wood. Trembling with terror and breathless with fatigue, a moment she rested against a tree, and pressing the weeping child to her beating bosom, in weak accents she cried, "Mighty God! they have murdered her mother: Oh! Being powerful as merciful, save us from destruction, and guide us from the dangers of this awful solitude."

Her fervent petition ended; she looked around and would have ventured farther but the path was, from a vast quantity of underwood having interwoven itself with the hanging branches of the more lofty trees, rendered impassible; meantime dark heavy clouds had gathered round, the wind blew fearfully thro' the forest, and the vivid lightning quivered through the almost impenetrable gloom, while

while the rolling thunders seemed to shake the vast concave of heaven.

The child terrified to trembling silence, could only cling to the breast of her protectress, whose condition was yet more pitiable from being sensibly alive to all the horrid dangers of their situation; and indeed so exhausted were her delicate spirits by the threatening violence of contending elements, and fear of the more insatiate fury of cruel, lawless man, that unable longer to support herself or her helpless charge, she sunk almost resigned to the earth, resolving patiently to await the pleasure of that Being who raiseth and can still the beating tempest.

Long she lay shivering in the chilling blast, and drenched in the heavy rain, weakly striving to shelter the poor infant, (who felt almost lifeless) with the train of her gown, when her thoughts reverting to the fate of Bella's mother, either murdered, or distracted for her loss, she nearly forgot the remembrance of her

own evils, and if self obtruded at all, it was when lamenting the distress her unusual absence would occasion at Basil's cottage.

In these and other contemplations varied and sad, upwards of an hour had elapsed, the wind had somewhat abated, and the rain no longer poured in torrents; yet all was dreary and dark, when a rustling among the trees made her start, and renewed every sensation of terror; even Bella raised her head, and in that moment a beam of moonlight breaking through the gloom discovered a small spaniel struggling to make way through the thick underwood.

“My mamma's Fidelle,” cried Bella, as the little animal leapt upon her with every possible demonstration of pleasure; “And we will follow where he leads,” added Miss Barry, “and if (sighing) your mamma lives he may guide us to her.” Saying this she arose and though suffering severely from the effects

effects of wet and cold, resolved to make another effort to emerge from the forest.

The dog frisked round them, then crept under the wood, but quickly returning, barked and seemed to invite them to follow. Encouraged by the poor creature's eager gestures to make an attempt where he struggled for a passage, she exerted all her strength, and resolutely advancing, with some difficulty burst through the wood, and soon found herself in a less intricate path. Fidelle shook his tail, in token of approbation; the night was become serene, Bella began to prattle, and though reflection lay uneasy at her heart, Miss Barry felt more composed and her spirits less agitated.

The moon now shone with cheerful lustre and casting a mild light over the silent scene, discovered various openings on the forest, unknowing which direction to pursue, she mentally implored the guidance of heaven, and trusting to the instinctive knowledge

ledge of poor Fidelle, who very contentedly trotted on before, soon arrived at the boundary, and striking down a narrow lane, hedged with wild briars and woodbines, at the bottom, in the center of a level green, ornamented around with a young shrubbery, stood a neat though small mansion, erected in the cottage stile: Miss Barry was certainly pleased, but the child had no sooner caught a glimpse of the well known residence, than uttering a scream of wild joy, and clasping the neck of her preserver, she cried, "Bella's own house, Bella's mamma lives here." A low gate stood open, Miss Barry walked across the green, and gently pushing a half closed door entered a little hall. Every thing was still, not a murmur broke the dreary silence, and the moon shining through the latticed casements gave a pale solemnity to the whole scene: Miss Barry would have explored the dwelling in hopes of seeing some human being interested in her little charge, but the recollected words "*kill her!*" returning forcibly on her mind, she trembled, lest her fears should.

should be lost in some horrid certainty; this idea united with her weakness, for a moment suspended every power; she breathed quick, and setting down the child, staggered to a chair for support.

No expected evil, no dreaded loss, depressed the infant heart of Bella, she flew eagerly across the hall, and with delighted haste opening an opposite door, cried, "My own mamma! my own mamma!" Miss Barry, though immoveable, could yet observe the objects around her, and as Bella entered the parlour beheld a lady extended on the floor, with her head reclining on the bosom of a lovely young woman, who alternately wiped the tears from her own eyes, and the pallid cheeks of her she supported. At the voice of Bella they both started, but the eldest springing from the arms of the other, and snatching the smiling little one to her heart, wildly cried, "My child! my child! heaven hath restored my child!"

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The younger lady rejoiced in Bella's safety, but she had not experienced the maternal pang; neither could she feel the maternal delight which now glowed in the bosom of Bella's mother; but with an air of blended gratitude, pity, and admiration, advanced to the fainting Miss Barry, and assisting her to a sofa, kindly pressed her cold hand, and gently forced her to swallow a glass of wine, offered something like acknowledgments for her care of the child, but ignorant how much she had endured to preserve her, appeared more anxious to restore her to composure, and contribute to her welfare, by wringing the water from her hair, and attiring her poor shivering form in dry clothes.

Meantime the mother of Bella continued to express her joy in the most frantic manner, until her sister, (for such the younger lady proved) to compose her agitated spirits, and, if possible, divert her thoughts, softly reminded her, that in her own satisfaction for the safety of Bella she had forgotten to offer  
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any acknowledgments to the charming stranger who had been her preserver.

"True," cried she, for a moment quitting the child, with fervor taking the hands of Miss Barry, and casting herself at her feet, "true; then Oh! thou blest restorer of my darling, let my present joy demonstrate what gratitude I owe—I feel—I cannot—cannot express it; but no,—you must be a mother, feel a mother's pangs, a mother's pleasures, before you can conceive my present transports; then, and only then, thou beautiful restorer of my treasure, thou wilt learn to pity and to pardon a mother's weakness."

"Rise, madam, I conjure you," replied the enfeebled Miss Barry, in a languid voice, "distress me not by a posture so unbecoming; pray rise, and cease to degrade the sweetest feelings of nature with the name of weakness, deign to believe, that in my own idea I have only performed the common duty of humanity."

ty, if more, am I not rewarded in your present happiness?"

The transports of the mother having now subsided into a tranquil pleasure, she requested her sister to prepare the evening repast, and Miss Barry finding herself too much indisposed to return home that night, entreated a messenger might be dispatched with an assurance of her safety, to quiet the apprehensions of Basil's family; but vain was the request, the only attendant the little mansion could boast was a female servant, who had been entrusted with the care of Bella; but in listening to the soft tale of a rustic admirer, had suffered the child to leave her sight, when insensible of danger she had wandered to that part of the forest where providentially her soft complaint reached the ear of Miss Barry. On missing the child, the servant ran wildly about the garden, orchard, and adjacent fields, and unable to trace her steps, on the return of the ladies from their evening walk, crying, "Miss Bella is drowned or lost," fled from  
their

their presence, leaving the mother in a state of distraction, and the aunt in little better; this being the case, no account could be sent to the cottage, and Miss Barry was constrained to remain satisfied with an assurance that soon as the morning dawned a peasant should be procured to carry her commands.

A neat repast soon made its appearance when, with the most amiable frankness and hospitality Mrs. Fitzaubin and her sister pressed their fair guest to partake of it, but, alas! the agitation and fatigue of the few preceding hours, added to her own secret dejection, had so much affected her spirits, and delicate frame, that she discovered every symptom of a burning fever, her lips were parched, her eyes heavy, and through her cheeks flushed a deep hectic red, her limbs shivered with cold, and all her ideas wandered. Alarmed at her condition, her new friends with the most affectionate care attended her to bed, and, during the night, watched her with anxious solicitude. The morning brought

Agnes

Agnes, with Athwold and Ethelinde; but they were totally unheeded by the poor sufferer, who, in her delirium, raved on the names of Athwold, Martini, and St. Clair, and closing every sentence with "Ethelinde is forgotten! Ethelinde is undone!" would struggle to escape from bed, and on being prevented would sink into unconscious stupor. For many days she remained in a very dangerous and uncertain state, while her friends, attached from a sympathy equal to their gratitude, never for a moment left her, and in her much desired recovery promised themselves the sweetest reward for their trouble.

At length the fever abated, her reason returned, and though unable to speak, she would look up with an interesting gratitude expressive beyond the power of the most studied eloquence. In the first moments of returning sense she perfectly recollected the occurrences of the evening in which she had been taken ill, and sensible, from her exces-

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five weakness, that she had been some time under the roof of Mrs. Fitzaubin, in a tremulous voice demanded of Agnes, whether any letters had yet arrived for her? Being answered in the negative, she feebly prest her hands upon her breast, and burst into such an agony of tears, as greatly alarmed her friends, lest the agitation should occasion a relapse; it however produced no other effect than adding a yet deeper shade to that melancholy which appeared to have taken a lasting and fatal root. Nothing could exceed the langour of her spirits, yet her strength returned, and she assumed a serenity of manner which wore the mild appearance of resignation.

When able to walk she would have returned to Basil's cottage, but this was kindly opposed by her friends, and indeed the good natured Agnes, neglectful of her own interest, and only consulting the comfort and convenience of her dear Miss Barry, entreated she would remain a little longer where she could

could be so much better attended, promising to come every day as well to receive her commands as to give Athwold and Ethelinde a walk. We are easily persuaded to what we wish. Miss Barry, to the high gratification of Mrs. Fitzaubin and her sister, and the no less contentment of Agnes, at length assented to their united requests, and agreed to reside some time longer at the forest house: Nor was it any wonder her heart gave it the preference: In the cottage of Agnes she indeed met with simple honesty, unaffected good nature, and a desire to please; but in the mansion of Mrs. Fitzaubin, she found the intelligent mind, the benevolent heart, and the brilliant understanding, adorned with all the refinements of a highly finished education, and so powerful was the secret impulse towards these ladies in her breast, that had circumstances justified the idea, she had conceived something more than a common attachment endeared them to her. Gratitude on their part first laid the basis of regard for Miss Barry, and as she recovered, the prepossessing charm

charm in her manner, the surprising loveliness of her figure, and those elevated sentiments, which could not be obscured even by the disadvantages of the situation under which she appeared, engaged their admiration and respect, at the same time they secured a warm and sincere friendship.

The sisters often, when alone, expressed a surprise, that a young creature, so formed by nature and education to grace the most ennobled condition in life, should conceal herself in such low obscurity; yet when they considered the rectitude of her ideas, and the retiring modesty of her conduct, they attributed her seclusion rather to some laudable though secret motive, than to conceal indiscretion, or indulge romantic novel hopes: Impressed with these sentiments towards each other, an intimacy ensued, and an amiable freedom tinged with respect, 'the cause and not the effect of familiarity,' soon prepared the way for a confidence and regard which sweetened their retirement, and tended to promote

promote their mutual happiness and welfare. So quiet, serene, and contented, did the little family of Mrs. Fitzaubin now appear in the eyes of Miss Barry, that could she have banished corroding reflection, "plucked from the memory a rooted sorrow," and forgot she had been happier, the life she now led was so suited to her pensive turn of mind, she had pronounced herself happy : She daily walked to Basil's cottage, and, when her spirits permitted the exertion, instructed the children as usual, in their lessons, and unwilling that the honest couple should lose by their disinterested kindness, she paid her board the same as when their constant guest, so that though she resided with Mrs. Fitzaubin, the cottage was still her nominal home.

Athwold and Ethelinde soon became the intimate and delighted companions of Bella, who being a few years older, in all their little innocent sports was the happy directress, while they, as their young ideas expanded, seeing she was caressed by Miss Barry, fondly endeavoured to imitate her endearing manners, and be equally approved.

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CHAP. V.

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IT will be naturally conceived that Miss Barry felt at least an equal desire to be acquainted with the circumstances that could induce people of so superior an understanding and appearance as Mrs. Fitzaubin and her sister, to seclude themselves in so very remote a solitude, and that in the gay season of life, when the world is supposed to display so many charms to allure and captivate the senses, but the same delicacy of sentiment which repressed their inquiries, sealed also the lips of their amiable guest; yet their mutual silence was very remote from a suspicion that a disclosure would expose secret indiscretion, and by lessening the opinion weaken a friendship so pleasing to all; it rather originated in

a tender fear that inquiry would only awaken painful remembrance, and recall ideas perhaps better to be forgotten for ever. Thus many weeks elapsed, and still they remained perfect strangers to the history of each other, until one day that a letter was presented to Mrs. Fitzaubin: Having perused it with a smiling pleasure, she informed Miss Barry that a very few days would render her felicity complete, by restoring a beloved husband, whom she trusted would prove an agreeable acquisition to their retirement.

With a timid and respectful air Miss Barry then first ventured to hint her surprise, that ladies of such distinguished merit and endowments should, by secluding themselves, deprive the world of the pleasure and advantages their society and example could afford.

"And might I not, my charming young friend," replied Mrs. Fitzaubin, with a mildly penetrating look, "more than retort upon you, who in all the pride of youth and beauty  
withdraw

withdraw from an admiring world? Who free, unengaged, and formed with every natural and acquired grace, every endearing virtue that can bless the heart of man, should hide these excellencies in deep obscurity? Yet I trust, my sweet girl, when a longer unremiting friendship and attention to your wishes shall have rendered me worthy your confidence, you will vouchsafe to indulge me; in the mean time could I hope a recital of the circumstances of my very uninteresting life, would be any gratification, most cheerfully should you have it."

Miss Barry appeared much embarrassed, yet assured her, she should not only be highly gratified, but consider herself much honored by so pleasing a mark of confidence being reposed in her friendship. Mrs. Fitzaubin, after an assenting bow from her sister, commenced her relation in the following words.

"Though descended from an illustrious family, at a very early age I found myself an

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orphan,

orphan, destitute of every possession to support the pride of birth, or alleviate penury, and pitiable indeed had been my fate, but for the compassionating benevolence of a maiden aunt, who, upon the decease of her brother, my last surviving parent, welcomed me to her arms, adopted me for her own, and indeed was unto me as a mother; she was the best, the first of women; in her kind bosom all the christian virtues reigned with the mildest lustre, and diffused over her manners a happy serenity which extended its influence over all who were honored with her notice and distinguished by her approbation."

"Though she had attained that age to which caprice, singularity, and ill nature are imputed in unmarried women, her conduct contradicted the illiberal assertion; for she possessed an innocent freedom and happy vivacity, which dressed the face of youth in smiles when she approached; and while the sanctity of her manners corrected every improper inclination, her refined sense and judgment instructed

structed the ignorant, artless, and unwary; though superior to most weaknesses herself, she pitied them in others, and never was the deluded female, the destitute wanderer, or sorrowing penitent turned with disdain from her dwelling; in commiserating their errors she would say, "I secure a pardon for my own, and would with the boasted pride of unattempted honor to consider, that virtue is not truly virtue until severely tried; tried and tempted by a favored object, and never 'till that signal victory is gained, let the presuming hand of brittle reputation cast the stone of cruel scorn at a betrayed unhappy sister!" Ah! would the female world but imitate her conduct, that character so much disdained and shunned would soon be held in higher estimation even by the young and gay.

Blest with the care, the counsels, and example of so wise and excellent a monitress, bad indeed must have been my principles, and depraved my heart, had I not imbibed some share of her virtues: Yes, my conduct

gave her pleasure while on earth, and cheered the bed of death; and, I will hope, my future actions never will dishonor her loved gracious memory, but if it is allowed the blessed to behold the dwellers upon earth, she will view with complacency the creature of her goodness attempting to imitate her worth, and acting as she would have directed.

“Happy and respected, with scarce a wish to interrupt the peaceful current of my days, I lived until I had attained my eighteenth year, at that period my aunt accepted the invitation of a friend to pass a few months in Dublin, and I had permission, during her absence, to accompany a young lady on a party of pleasure with her parents to the famed Lake of Killarney: Pleased with the attention of my friends, and delighted with the novelty of our amusements, time moved swiftly on, and I was requested to solicit a month longer, when a letter arrived from my aunt, informing me she was at home, and desired my immediate presence on matters  
of

of importance: Alarmed at the unusual impatience of her stile, and fearing indisposition was the cause, I bade a hasty adieu to my friends, and in a few hours reached home in safety."

"With trembling steps and a beating heart I flew to her apartment, she welcomed me with all her accustomed tenderness, and commended my ready compliance, yet with an embarrassment to me inexplicable: She was much paler than when we parted, and her eyes were rivetted on me as if to penetrate my thoughts, and discover a something yet unknown. Astonished beyond expression at her demeanour, my looks demanded explanation, but she shunned my glance, pressed my hands, and in painful confusion would have retired, when throwing myself between her and the door, I conjured her, by the names of friend, mother, benefactress, to speak and relieve my torturing anxiety. "Rise, my best child," cried she, with increasing agitation, "rise, your tender fears

only augment the conflict in my bosom. I thought I had collected sufficient resolution, let me call it assurance, to disclose my future purpose, but find it requires a fortitude of which I am not mistress, to confess a weakness—no I cannot, my Jessy, yet support the idea of meeting a mild silent reproach from your eyes, from you who have ever dutifully looked up to me for direction and example. Stop,” continued she, seeing me about to reply, “stop and learn from me the insufficiency of human wisdom, to impede the progress of the passions.”

“When much about your age, I was addressed by a youth endowed with every virtue that could ennoble human nature, and with a person formed to captivate the heart of woman; every necessary preliminary was arranged, and the day appointed for our nuptials, when to blight my every hope of peace and happiness on earth, unknown to me he was involved in a fatal duel, and in the very hour that I with modest happy expectation awaited

awaited the arrival of a gay bridegroom, his bleeding body, supported by servants, was introduced; his latest breath invoked a blessing on me, and recommending to my kindest care an infant brother, he expired within my arms."

"When the first days of my distracting grief were over, with much solicitude I sought the child, vowing to devote every future hour to form his mind to goodness, and promote his welfare, for, like his brother, he was destitute of fortune: Long I sought him in vain and at length discovered he had been taken from nurse by an opulent uncle, and carried to England. This for the present sufficed, but I secretly resolved to obey the wishes of my departed lover, and when opportunity offered, protect him with my utmost power."

"Much about this period your father formed an attachment with a lovely though indigent young woman of fashion, and to the entire disapprobation of his father, who had

more ambitious views for him, in a short time married her. Though confined in their circumstances, and lost to the world, they enjoyed a large portion of happiness, which knew no interruption 'till death unexpectedly broke in upon their little dwelling, and divided the faithful pair."

"To all the helplessness of genteel life your mother united a delicate constitution, which before you had attained your sixth year laid her in the grave, and plunged your surviving parent in a melancholy he never recovered. My father's resentment continued unabated, nor even when his son expiring implored his pardoning blessing, would he vouchsafe it, though he relented so far as to grant me a reluctant permission to protect you, provided you was kept far distant from his sight: To his severe pleasure I was obliged to submit."

"I was still young, reputed handsome, and since the death of my brother, considered an heiress: These advantages you will easily believe

lieve assembled a numerous train of admirers, but my heart, faithful to my first love, and devoted to his memory, rejected their addresses, and with firmness I told them my resolution was taken never to wed."

"This determination a second time disappointing the expectations of my father, while under the influence of passion he made a will, bequeathing his whole fortune to a distant branch of the family, if I died unmarried; if I married the whole devolved to me, without any restriction whatever: By this proceeding he gratified an unjustifiable resentment, and precluded the possibility of effectually benefiting you. Soon after he paid the debt of nature, and I warm and zealous in a growing affection for you, welcomed you to my bosom and protection, and in all my circumscribed ability allowed, became unto my Jessy, what I must ever be, the friend and mother."

“My heart still revolting at a second choice, and fondly indulging the idea, that your modest beauty and growing excellence would engage some worthy youth to become your protector, before I left you for a happier world; I little regretted the severity of my father, particularly as I enjoyed the interest of his fortune, which was sufficient, and all I should have used, even had the principal been in my power.”

“Thus serene, blest with a self approving mind, and your artless dutiful regard, I lived without one anxious varying thought, until my late journey to Dublin, when chance or destiny introduced me to a young man—how shall I describe him? He is the perfect image of my long departed lover! at his approach my faded cheek a moment wore its former glow, my eyes were rivetted upon his blooming face, while long indulged, long forgotten emotions fluttered at my heart, and methought the grave had restored my Edward. But what were the mingled sensations which  
surprised

surprised me, when, upon inquiry, I discovered in the lovely youth, that brother, so fondly recommended to my care by the dear dying Edward. I also learned, he groans beneath the weight of humiliating dependence, on an arbitrary, imperious, and unkind uncle, who indeed hath given him an education, but no profession, by which he might shake off the load of oppression that crushes his great spirit and embitters life."

"Deeply affected by these circumstances, tenacious of my promise vowed on the sacred relics of poor Edward—and why dissemble—to indulge a soft idea which I cannot conquer, I bid defiance to the sarcasm of a world that I am sensible will censure a woman of thirty-eight uniting with a youth of twenty, and offered him my hand as the only method left me to put him in undisturbed and indisputable possession of an ample fortune, and release him from the tyranny of his uncle. He consented, nor was I surprised or offended to behold more of gratitude and  
4 respect,

respect, than tenderness and rapture, on the occasion. In this arrangement think not, Jeffy," she continued, "that you or your interest are forgotten; a sum is allotted which secures you independence: And now, my child, the reason of your aunt's confusion is disclosed."

"It is unnecessary, my dear Miss Barry," continued Mrs. Fitzaubin, "to relate all I said on the occasion; it is sufficient, that amid a thousand embraces I assured her of my perfect approbation, that I rejoiced in her approaching happiness, and was prepared to esteem and respect the gentleman, as friend, guardian, and uncle; returning my caresses she then dismissed me, in order, as she said, to collect some share of composure, to receive the youth who was expected the same evening."

"It would be very difficult to describe my private sentiments on this occasion: I had ever considered my aunt as the most prudent  
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dent and best of women, and that very few equalled her in either sense, benevolence, or discretion; I was therefore firmly of opinion, that she was rather influenced by a desire to promote my welfare, discharge her sacred vow, and benefit a deserving youth, in kind remembrance of his brother, than to gratify that romantic passion, which deaf to the voice of reason, too often misleads the female heart. In her I knew the impetuosity of youth must be subsided, thoughtlessness succeeded by mature and wise reflection, and conceived an enlivened friendship to be the warmest sentiment she could feel; yet she acknowledged a softer sensation, what then, thought I, must be the wonderful youth that can inspire it? In truth my imagination pourtrayed him something more than mortal, and with restless impatience I awaited the hour of his appearance: Not so my aunt; a sweet serenity sat in her mild features, and her whole demeanour was become composed; I attempted to make her gay, and laughing told her, that were I a bride, I should be half wild with pleasure,

pleasure, and should think of nothing but gaiety, congratulations, the attentions of my lover, and the high favor I was conferring on him."

"And such ideas, Jeffy, once were mine," replied she, "to your age they belong; but that which is amiable and innocent in youth, would be not only ridiculous but reprehensible at my years. Think not then, my dear child, that though I have confessed a sentiment, perhaps, in me, unbecoming, that its indulgence is my prevailing motive in wedding the brother of my Edward: No: I trust my future conduct, and the unbounded freedom he will enjoy, without the restraint of an old woman on his actions, will at least convince him, and you, that I had had more generous and disinterested inducements for the nominal change of my condition: I call it nominal, because, though I will certainly become his wife, and would delight in his society, I shall often live in retirement, to leave him at perfect liberty to pursue those amusements

amusements adapted to his age; a fond old woman would be more insupportable than an unkind young one; the one is sure to disgust, the other may be softened."

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## CHAP. VI.

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**I** WAS prevented making any comment on this serious reply, by the arrival of the gentleman being announced: My aunt received him with evident pleasure, yet with more maternal satisfaction than the timid fondness of a mistress. On my being introduced, he offered his devoirs with an embarrassment, which made him appear to much disadvantage, and certainly gave me but an indifferent opinion of the gracefulness of his demeanour; but as that confusion wore off, he discovered an obliging complacency of manners which rendered him truly pleasing, and

and I soon ceased to wonder at my aunt's partiality."

"His countenance was animated, his figure genteel, and his sentiments on every subject liberal and refined; he was—Oh! heaven, he was too amiable for my peace; my ungovernable heart confessed his power long before I could admit the thought of supplanting the relation, who had been from infancy the tender faithful guardian of my happiness, and the maternal directress of all my ways. There needed no confession from the lips of the lover of what sentiments I had inspired him with; his languid yet expressive eye, his tremulous voice and altered appearance were sufficient confirmation of the conflict within his bosom; indeed so deeply did the internal struggle affect him, that he was seized with a dangerous fever, and during his wild delirium discovered the secret his lips had concealed with the nicest care."

"My

"My aunt uttered no complaint, no reproach, but during every lucid interval would soothe him with promises which I deemed impossible to be performed, and seemed more anxious to compose his spirits, and restore his health, as a much regarded friend, than to secure the plighted hand of the affianced lover."

At length he shewed signs of amendment: My joy could not be repressed, it burst the feeble restraint of my aunt's presence, and in wild unconnected sentences I partly avowed my attachment, when I meant only to demonstrate satisfaction on his recovery: I believe my artless transports aided his returning health, for when he heard my voice, and beheld me watching by his pillow, with tender care depicted in my face, his pale cheek would glow, but, ere his eye could thank me, it would turn with a mournful timid expression on my attending aunt, who certainly felt a degree of pleasure equal to my own; but her's was placid and serene; and I, insensible

sible as ungrateful, was supposing from her calmness, that a discovery of our sentiments had effected a change in her own, and provoked her to resentment, when the blessed woman was projecting our mutual felicity."

"One day, when he was able to sit up, she took up a hand of each, and having pressed them with ardour to her bosom, told us, that we must not, could not be surprised that she was no stranger to our reciprocal attachment. Be not agitated, continued she, I approve your passion; the union of those I love best on earth, is my dearest wish; to constantly behold you flourishing in worth and harmony together, would keep me yet a little longer from the friendly grave, where my dear hopes have long been cold and buried: Would then, my children, that I could give you independance as easily as I can give you happiness, but, alas! you know how fatally I am restricted, and that only on a husband I can bestow affluence. When first I beheld you, dear image of my fainted Edward, I  
felt

felt most happy in the power of adding fortune to your early worth; then you was free and unattached, now the acquisition and its sad appendage, by precluding every hope of union with my Jessy, could only heap repentance on your head, and strew your path with thorns, so that must never be; that which a little time ago would have been a virtue in me, would now load me with the blackest guilt—we will be the dearest friends, my Henry, but nothing more.”

“After this conversation it was agreed among us, though with faint hopes of success, to attempt the feelings of his uncle, the answer, though a shock, conveyed little disappointment; it commanded my lover, on pain of eternal displeasure and disinherittance, to think no more of an Irish match, but to return instantly to be united to a lady, who, though every way his superior, had vouchsafed from his recommendation to promise the honor of her hand.”

“Though

“Though mortified and distressed, my lover remained as unmoved in his affection to me as determined in his rejection of the lady, and in a dutiful, yet spirited letter, informed his uncle of his unalterable resolution to endure scorn, want, and all their concomitant evils, rather than degrade his principles, and sacrifice his feelings, by giving his hand to one, when his heart was devoted to another.”

“This letter dispatched, my aunt, with all the true dignity of conscious benevolence, and sweet persuasion beaming in her eyes, told him, that though she was the last who would encourage a rebellious spirit to a parent, she perfectly approved his conduct, and since he had asserted the prerogative of human nature, and not yielded his judgment, happiness, and freedom of action, to the rigid will of an imperious relation; if the possession of Jessy’s hand, and the free participation of her income could be any recompense, they both awaited his acceptance. It would be needless

to

to repeat our joy and gratitude on this disinterested offer; we fell at her feet, promising to be guided by her superior direction in every future action of our lives, when she raised us with the fondest assurances of regard and protection to the last hour of her existence."

"The uncle of my lover disdaining to reply, in less than two months I became the happy, the adored bride of my ever loved Henry Fitzaubin. Soon after we embarked for England, where, for near four years we lived the most contented of created beings; the birth of my little Bella was an addition to our common happiness, which knew no interruption until she had attained her third year, then it pleased the almighty to reward a life of unsullied virtue in my aunt with a glorious immortality. Surely the peaceful conscience of a dying saint is the sweet earnest of a promised heaven; the blessed woman felt no anxious fear, but that arising from the knowledge of our forlorn condition; with resignation

signation she expired within my arms, while the parting blessing trembled on her closing lips. Our affliction for the irreparable loss of such a friend may be better conceived than described, indeed so totally had it overwhelmed us, that not until our last guinea was changed had a thought of our destitute situation once obtruded on our sorrowing hours."

"A stranger I hope to the humiliating embarrassments of poverty, you can form no idea of the varied distresses we experienced: Reduced to a single room, in an obscure corner of London, the sale of our clothes, and the ornaments of happier days, were our sole support, our only resource from want and a prison. At length that poor fund was exhausted, and shuddering at the approach of horrors still unknown, we stood upon the brink of black despair. Where were then the fairy scenes of smiling bliss which sanguine youth pourtrays in marriages of love? Alas! the sweet illusion was dispelled, and misery, frowning, solid misery, stood unveiled."

"One

“One morning Mr. Fitzaubin, to conceal his own agony, and unable to support the view of me weeping over my half famished Bella, left the house, and indifferent where he wandered, soon found himself in Kensington Gardens; immersed “in meditation even to madness,” he walked, regardless of the gay crowd which fluttered around, and sought a more retired part, where, unnoticed, he might indulge his melancholy. Turning into the grove, he met a lady not unremembered; a blush, arising from a sensation something like shame tinged his pallid cheek, and he would have hastily past her, but she stopt, caught his arm, and in a voice, pityingly kind, exclaimed, ‘Poor Harry Fitzaubin!’ Poor indeed! replied he, with awakening pride; for when the heart is depressed by poverty that passion is most prevailing in a liberal mind, feels a certain consequence, in happier circumstances never heeded, and fancies insult where it never was intended. Poor indeed! then he replied haughtily, yet still too proud, too great of soul, to accept the pity of Miss

Fitzaubin. 'Be not mistaken in me,' resumed she, (for she was the daughter of his uncle) 'be not mistaken, my dear cousin, pity is not the sentiment I feel towards you, let me convince you my regard is sincere and disinterested, and as I was partly the fatal cause, though undesignedly, of your displeasing my father, do me the kindness to owe a reconciliation to my interposition.'

"This young lady was the sole heiress of Mr. Fitzaubin, and though the daughter of a most unworthy mother, the darling and delight of his age; she had been bred up with her cousin, and ever loved him with something more than the mild affection of a sister, all her passions were violent, and having never received the least restraint, but rather encouragement from the example of her mother, they became ungovernable. Her regard for my husband had been rather warm than delicate, and as he never felt the smallest predilection for her, to avoid her advances, he gladly consented to execute some business  
of

of his uncle's in Dublin, when the circumstances already related introduced us to each other: No sooner had she learned his attachment in Ireland, than the dread of losing him for ever silenced every objection, banished all reserve, and with the long unrestricted impetuosity of her nature she flew to her father, confessed her passion, and vowed her very existence depended on an union with Harry Fitzaubin. Powerful as was ambition in the breast of her parent, her happiness was yet dearer; he consented, and dispatched the peremptory mandate for his return, already mentioned."

"But to proceed, my husband offered every respectful acknowledgment to his cousin for her intended kindness, at the same time declined it, as his union with the most amiable, and from his distresses the most unfortunate of women, he conceived must preclude every hope of reconciliation with his uncle. On the avowal of his marriage her colour varied, and for a moment she remained

musling, but soon recovering from her confusion, with an attempted smile, and well affected generosity, she replied, as his marriage now secured him from the obtrusive addresses of the lady his uncle had selected, his wife's interest should induce him to make every effort to obtain some provision, and that if he was not too proud to accept her mediation, she would insure him a welcome from her father, and promote his welfare to the utmost of her power, only requesting he would conceal his being married 'till a better opportunity for disclosure, as the knowledge of it might further provoke his uncle, and render her exertions to benefit him unavailing."

"This was the moment of temptation and trial, for my poor Henry; his heart revolted from the disingenuous proceeding, as unworthy of himself, and dishonorable to me; but his helpless state, the horrors of impending want, and the hope, that by a passive silence only he might procure some permanent relief, and

and conscious at the same time that he practised no deceit on his cousin, whom he knew most interested in the affair, half reluctant half consenting, he suffered her to lead him to her carriage, in waiting, which soon drove them to his uncle's mansion. The lady spent some time in private with her father, and then introducing her cousin as a returning penitent, as such he was received, and as such welcomed."

"Pride, or perhaps some gentler feeling, flushed his uncle's cheek, on surveying his altered appearance, and in a manner somewhat kind he presented him an hundred pound note, to replenish his wardrobe; with this welcome unexpected donation he hastened to me, when we immediately removed to a better lodging, and again the cheering blessings of plenty were diffused among us."

"The heart of Fitzaubin was formed for gaiety, and attuned to pleasure, and no sooner was he possessed of present affluence, and in

the prospect of a future establishment, than all his former vivacity returned, and he might be truly said to enjoy the brilliant circles to which he attended his cousin. He had become an inmate in the house of his uncle, and only a visitor in his own, yet I forbore complaint or murmur, in the fond hope that a little time would put him in possession of a genteel employment, promised through the interest of his uncle, and repay me for all the cheerless hours of his absence. In this situation some months elapsed, and as I knew him in habits of intimacy with some dissipated young men of fashion, and observed a levity of manner in him never seen before, I trembled for his morals, and though silent was seriously unhappy."

"At length he remained more at home, became pensive, and not unfrequently hinted a fear that his cousin's passion would yet involve him in distress, and prevent him receiving any essential benefit from his uncle's returning friendship. I confess I treated this  
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apprehension as lightly as I felt it, sometimes attributing his fear to the vanity of self approbation; at others I was inclined to suppose he had mistaken the effusions of friendship, flowing from a persuasive tongue, for those of a warmer sentiment, and that her affectionate attentions awakening the remembrance of her former partiality, led him into the error, that the embers were not yet extinguished; but to conceive the female heart so depraved, so lost to delicacy and a sense of honor, as to encourage an improper passion for the husband of another, was an enormity of guilt, of which my knowledge of human nature gave me no idea: — Too soon conviction reached me."

"One evening he returned in an alarming agitation, and throwing himself in a chair, almost breathless with agony, he informed me, his worst fears were lost in terrible certainty, and his ruin complete. Oh! what a demon becomes the woman, who, alike insensible to goodness and to shame, throws aside the dig-

nity of conscious virtue, and, self seduced, yields unblushing to each criminal propensity that leads to gratify the most degrading passions: Such, I fear, was Matilda Fitzaubin; who, being alone one morning with her cousin, with shameless front avowed her guilty wishes; hanging on his neck, with ardent fondness she proposed elopement, confessed that for him she would abjure her virtue, parent, character, country, and conscience; adding, that she had secured a large sum, and could trust to her father's fondness for the rest. In vain my husband remonstrated, with affectionate calmness, urged her various pretensions to admiration, the many claims her father and the world had on her, and lastly reminded her he had a wife, a wife who knew no joy but in him. At the name her eyes sparkled with malignant fury, and almost bursting with rage she cried, 'Yes, there's the charm that fascinates you; it is not honor, empty bauble, that would reconcile you to a life of wretchedness. No. Yet, stay, and only let me share that hard ungrateful heart  
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in common with her; peevish virtue, I despise it, laugh at the fancied treasure, and would only live to love."

"Shocked and disgusted by an avowal of such loose principles, and a display of such shameless immodesty, he started from her embrace, and bowing, in a serious half disdainful voice, requested she would contemplate the value of virtue, when she should ever have that portion of respectful regard due to his uncle's daughter. 'Most virtuous, dutiful Sir,' retorted she, with sarcastic malevolence, 'I stand indebted to you, counsels, and will repay you for them: Go, contemplate the value of virtue in your wife, and teach her how to live upon her husband's moral doctrine.' With a scornful and resentful air she then quitted his presence, and next morning when he waited on his uncle, instead of the accustomed salute, with a distant bow he left the room, and in a few minutes a servant presented him a note, containing the following words."

“You must be too sensible of the enormity of your own attempted guilt, to need from me either explanation or reproach; I disdain both, and leave you, lost young man, to the punishment of conscience; but expect no more the confidence, aid, or protection, of an highly insulted uncle.

FRANCIS FITZAUBIN.”

“Well, said I with assumed composure, after having perused the letter, well, my dearest Henry, let not the machinations of an unprincipled designing woman so much depress your spirits, trust in that gracious Being who brings the hidden works of darkness to exposure, in hours when least expected; He will confound the malice of your enemy disappoint her purpose, and display your innocence; in the mean time be conscious rectitude and the dignity of conquering honor your comfort and support; and though fortune, my life, hath proved fickle, and friends have proved unkind, you have a wife that will never leave you, or forsake you.—Far from

being soothed by my endearments, they appeared to increase his agony, and for long he was absent, dejected, and incoherent in his manner, so much so, indeed, that I trembled for his reason; at length, however, he became composed, if not resigned, and in joy and thankfulness for that mercy I almost forgot the bitterness of our fate. How many different plans did we then project for the future, and how many were abandoned for want of means to pursue them; for surely none but those who have trod the thorny paths of adversity can conceive the inconveniences attending the want of ready money."

"Thus passed our days for several months, until the hydra-headed monster again approaching, awakened us to a sense of all our former horrors; horrors augmented by having for a time listened to the illusive voice of hope. Henry was yielding to despondence, while I believed myself resigned to the worst that could happen, until a calamity threatened which roused every dormant feel-

ing; reduced me to a state most pitiable, and taught my anguished heart there was no condition, however wretched it might appear to our dark comprehensions, but what heaven might render yet worse."

"My child, my Bella, was attacked with the small-pox, nor had I the power to procure her proper nourishment, far less call in medical aid; her disorder had almost reached its crisis, when one day that her father, sunk in torpid stupor, sat gazing on her altered countenance, while I held her in my trembling arms, expecting every moment that the guiltless spirit would forsake its suffering frame, a young lady was introduced; I would have rose, but enfeebled by affliction and want, my feet refused to do their office: She drew near, I looked up, and in her lovely features beheld the softened image of my Henry. It was his charming sister, who having returned from France, where she had been sent by her uncle for education, inquired for her brother; she was commanded at the  
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house of Mr. Fitzaubin never more to repeat the name of one so undeserving every way of notice or regard: But affection was too prevalent in her gentle bosom to obey the harsh command, and justice taught her to condemn no one unheard, so being informed by one of the servants of his residence, yielding to the kindly impulse of a generous nature, she arrived in the moment of our anguish for the fate of Bella."

"Having tenderly embraced her brother, she saluted me with all the warmth of sisterly regard, while her compassionating tears fell on the face of my suffering baby. Mr. Fitzaubin, in very few words, explained the nature of his imputed offence at his uncle's, and his sister was too well acquainted with the disposition of her cousin to admit the faintest doubt of his veracity. Marcella inherits a small independance in right of her mother, and so affected was the charming girl with the wretchedness of our condition, and the unmerited severity of her uncle, that unmindful

mindful of his displeasure, the consequences, and her own interest, she bade adieu to his protection, with all the splendor and gaiety of his mansion, and insisted on sharing her pittance with us; we would have dissuaded, but in vain, the generous girl declared herself resolved; that she preferred retirement, and wished to quit the town immediately. Conceive our united gratitude and satisfaction! Welcome as was her assistance to people in our wretched situation, it was poor in comparison to the pleasure we promised ourselves in the society of so beloved and charming a benefactress."

"On the recovery of my dear little girl, and the arrangement of some necessary matters, we quitted the metropolis, and, induced by an advertisement of reasonable board at a neighbouring town, arrived there about two years since; the accommodations by no means answering our expectations, or suiting our convenience, we were preparing for another part of the country, when Mr. Fitzau-  
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bin recollecting Lord Avondale, with whom he had been intimate at school, had a castle in the neighbourhood and happened to be there; he waited on his Lordship, and explaining his situation, he generously gave him a lease of this house and the adjoining fields, upon very moderate terms. Here, then, my fair friend, we have resided in undisturbed tranquillity; our only regret that my amiable sister in the bloom of youth and loveliness, should be immured in solitude, when so charmingly calculated to shine in genteel life; but the sweet cheerfulness with which she always silences these complaints convinces me she is contented, and in the reflection of her own benevolence enjoys a pleasure none but minds like her own can either feel or conceive. A matter of business relative to her fortune obliged my husband to revisit London, and has detained him long beyond his wishes, for he delights in rural sports, and has not, I am persuaded, known the ennui of even an hour during our sejour here: He writes, I may expect him in a few days, and  
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also informs me, Lord Avondale, with his father and family, are to spend the remainder of the summer at the castle. I am not ambitious, continued Mrs. Fitzaubin, smiling, yet so amiable is that young nobleman, so exalted his sentiments, and elegant his manners, that I wish him the favored partner of my Marcella's heart."

"Banish such a wish," interrupted Marcella, it is every way impossible, for even did he honor me with an offer of his hand, I never could grant him a softer sentiment than approving friendship."

Here the conversation ceased, and Miss Barry, having expressed every proper acknowledgment for Mrs. Fitzaubin's interesting relation, set out on her accustomed visit to Basil's cottage.

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## CHAP. VII.

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**I**N vain Miss Barry endeavoured to shake off that heavy melancholy which obscured the brilliancy of her understanding and elegance of her demeanour; in vain she attempted to share the satisfaction which the expected arrival of Mr. Fitzaubin afforded her friends, still her mind sunk in desponding fears, which she kindly strove to hide from those she beheld interested in her happiness.

On her return one morning from a solitary ramble, she found a gentleman seated with Mrs. Fitzaubin, whom she imagined was her husband, until she arose and introduced Lord Avondale. His Lordship was  
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the second son of the Earl of Glenroy, and in right of his mother inherited the title and vast possessions annexed to the Earldom of Avondale; his father having several magnificent seats near the metropolis, seldom brought his family to the castle, it being situate in a very remote part of the North of England, and also disliked by his lady, though the paternal residence of a long line of illustrious ancestors, yet, in compliment and at the request of her son, who was fond of its antique grandeur, and admired the romantic beauty of the rich surrounding country; his Lordship consented to spend a few weeks at the castle towards the close of summer, and for the purpose of rendering every thing splendid and agreeable as possible, Lord Avondale had arrived in the North a few weeks previous to the period appointed for the promised visit.

On the decease of an only brother and sole surviving child, the valuable domains of Avondale had devolved on: Lady Glenroy, who though far from being partial to these native shades,

shades, yet possessed a large portion of that ambition so common in great families, of preserving the ancient name and title; upon the failure of her Ladyship and offspring, that of Avondale becoming extinct, and the fortune the property of a very distant female branch of the noble house, induced her ladyship to be very anxious and urgent with her son to marry; she had proposed several matches, in her idea unexceptionable, but the youth possessing a delicacy of sentiment peculiar to minds like his own, had rejected them with a firmness which plainly told her he would not be controuled in a matter so essential to his own happiness.

As her ladyship was of a very proud, violent, and imperious temper, this determined opposition to her most ardent wish had often transported her passions beyond the bounds of reason, and in perfect frenzy she would threaten him with a long list of the most improbable evils, which he very wisely treated as the ravings of an enraged woman, disappointed

pointed of her favorite purpose ; yet Lord Avondale was a dutiful son, and as in his mother's right he inherited such distinctions and high independence, he felt an earnest desire to yield obedience to her wishes, could he have done it on any other terms than resigning the first and dearest prerogative of human nature.

With a careful and scrutinizing eye he therefore examined the various qualities and pretensions of every female within the circle of his acquaintance ; among the great he acknowledged there were some bright ornaments of rank and goodness, yet, in general, he discovered an inordinate love of pleasure or insipidity : In the middle condition of life, the most likely to meet with unassuming worth, and the heart formed for social and domestic happiness, he had little acquaintance, and the very few opportunities he had to form an opinion of the more inferior station, convinced him, in that class there was a deficiency of delicacy and refinement, without

out which his heart never could select a partner.

Very early in life his Lordship had contracted an intimacy with Mr. Fitzaubin, and though time, distance, and a variety of situations had much estranged them, he felt sincere satisfaction when offered an opportunity to oblige him. The mild virtues of Mrs. Fitzaubin his Lordship held in the highest degree of admiration; and the uncommon merit of Marcella, as pourtrayed by her brother, he particularly venerated, and allowed very few young women, in the bloom of youth and beauty, would resign the tempting pleasures of a gay fluttering world to soften the rigour of a brother's fate, and contribute to the comfort of his family in a remote and cheerless solitude.

Yet, notwithstanding these excellencies, his romantic and glowing imagination pictured a something, yet undiscovered, to form the heart that could captivate and secure his  
own;

own; so long indeed had he in vain sought for this finished model of feminine perfection, that he began to suspect it a creature of his own brain, and not to be found in the works of nature until introduced to Miss Barry.

No sooner had he beheld the placid dignity of her appearance, the surpassing loveliness of her animated countenance, and the irresistible charm in her modest manner, which continually displayed the soft sensibility and exalted goodness of her heart, than he became the enraptured lover, and without once adverting to the many difficulties which might interpose between him, and his wishes, with all the vivacity of youth, and fervour of a generous nature, he marked the pensive beauty, however poor and unfriended, for his own. Supposing her a relation of the Fitz-aubin family, he readily imputed her air of langour and dejection to the pecuniary embarrassment of her friends; friends, whose welfare

welfare and interest he was' more than ever determined to support and promote.

Entirely occupied by these pleasing ideas, never had Lord Avondale appeared to such disadvantage; absent and inattentive, he scarce replied to any question, yet when Mrs. Fitz-aubin, on dinner being announced, requested his Lordship would honor her with his company, and partake their slender repast, he recollected himself enough to lengthen his own pleasure, and gladly accepted the invitation.

Satisfied with his own secret resolutions, during dinner he regained his accustomed ease, and devoting his attention to her who solely engaged his thoughts, insensibly led her into conversation, which discovering the purity of her mind and the rectitude and refinement of her judgment and sentiments, compleated her conquest, and secured a pleasing empire over his heart. Never had Lord Avondale past so short, so happy a day; the sweet complacency of Miss Barry encouraged every

every hope, and while in idea he beheld in her the kind, attached, consenting mistress, his soul in secret paid her adoration, and had it not been a fear of offending a mind so chaste and delicate as hers, he had fallen at her feet and offered her vows of everlasting faith, love, and constancy.

At length the sun sinking beneath the distant mountains, reminded him his visit had been long, and apprehensive it might also be obtrusive on a family so regular and retired, he took a reluctant leave, but not before he had exacted a promise, that they should all visit the castle next day, and honor him with their opinion of some admired paintings, which he intended should decorate his mother's dressing-room, though mentally he now assigned them to a very different purpose, and for a very different person.

His Lordship's horse was scarcely out of sight when Mrs. Fitzaubin, with a look expressive of secret satisfaction, requested Miss

Barry's opinion of the amiable Avondale. With perfect candour and ease she replied, she believed him deserving of all her encomiums, that his sentiments were just and noble, his manners certainly pleasing, and that his declared intention of exerting his interest to place Mr. Fitzaubin in a situation more worthy of him, gave her a very high idea of his benevolence. "You delight me," cried Mrs. Fitzaubin, "I do indeed expect the honor of his patronage for my husband, and through the interest of my charming Miss Barry." "Mine!" exclaimed she. "Yes, your's, sweet girl, for if his eyes convey the language of his heart, it feels your power."

Though not insensible of perfections which had hitherto involved her in a world of woe, Miss Barry was still unconscious of their powerful effect, and as if some sudden unexpected evil had burst upon her, she eagerly entreated Mrs. Fitzaubin to explain her meaning. Smiling at the seriousness of her air, she told her, an offer of Lord Avondale's

hand would soon do that, else she knew little of the eyes, and less of the human heart. "Ah! Madam, resumed Miss Barry, looking mournfully in her face, "you know not, I am as undeserving of that distinction, as beyond the power of accepting it; when I can attain sufficient composure to collect the leading circumstances of a sad, sad destiny, you shall hear the history of an unhappy woman whom you have vouchsafed to honor with your notice and protection; but do not, do not encourage any hope in the bosom of your friend, he is too good, too amiable; I would not have him share the fate, alas! of all who honor me with their preference."

Here the long repressed tears of anguish burst forth, and prevented further utterance; while Mrs. Fitzaubin, whose sensibility was painfully awakened, gently drew the poor sufferer's head upon her bosom, and silently wept with her, though ignorant of the cause: The inexplicable words, "undeserving the distinction as beyond the power of accepting it,"

it," still vibrated on her ear, and filling her mind with variety of thought, each succeeding conjecture added contradictory perplexity to the other.

The entrance of Marcella and the children proved a seasonable relief to both ladies, and the amiable girl knowing no recent distress of her sister's occasioned the scene she beheld, from motives of delicacy forbore inquiry or remark, and saying supper waited, with a kind pressure led Miss Barry from the room. The meal past in cheerless silence, and each retired at an early hour, without any farther comment being made on their noble visitor. Miss Barry laid her head on the pillow, but in vain courted the gentle influence of sleep to lull her cares even for a few hours in forgetfulness; still her restless perturbed mind retraced the scenes of a life, in which the darker shades of adversity were but too predominant: And such is the discontented state of human nature in general, that the past hours, though marked with deeper sorrow,

upon retrospect appear more bright than the present.

Such was the condition of this suffering unknown; she conceived her fate more severe than ever, and perhaps many will allow that the pang of suspense is more bitter than the most dreaded evil; in the one instance we feel the extent of our trials, in the other, we know not what agony that trial may bring; and it is an acknowledged axiom, that both our comforts and sorrows are greater in perspective, than when actually brought home. To inspire any breast with a warmer sentiment than friendship, was the wish most distant from Miss Barry's heart; and the thought of giving pain and disappointment to a generous nature, added poignancy to all her own secret distresses; she therefore determined as much as possible to avoid the presence of Lord Avondale, and when she could not, behave with distant politeness, which conduct she hoped if it could not impede the progress of his passion, (if he indulged one) would at least

least deprive him of opportunity to make any declaration, and having also resolved to decline attending her friends next day to the castle, she dropped into an unrefreshing slumber.

Next morning, on descending to breakfast, she was alarmed at beholding chagrin on the features of Marcella, and tears still trembling in the eyes of Mrs. Fitzaubin; the cause was soon explained; a letter had arrived from Mr. Fitzaubin, informing them, that the affairs of Marcella's agent had, within a few days, assumed a very disagreeable aspect, and on that account he was unavoidably detained in London.

"Matters will never be adjusted," cried Mrs. Fitzaubin, weeping, "my presentiments seldom mislead me; sorrow and I are familiarised, but my child—my generous Marcella—all must be ruined, unless Lord Avondale preserves us." As she finished, her eyes, though perhaps involuntarily fixed on Miss

Barry; the glance penetrated her heart, her absence from the castle might injure the interests of friends who had protected her; the mind of man was capricious, when under the influence of any indulged passion, too often unjust, and good as Lord Avondale appeared, he might resent on them her apparent ingratitude and indifference. These considerations shaking every determination of the preceding evening, she prepared to go to the castle, yet resolved to assume a cool reserve, and act with a circumspection that would repress every rising hope in the bosom of his Lordship.

She had scarcely arranged her plan when the arrival of the equipage was announced, and as it could not draw up to the house, owing to the narrowness of the lane, she with Bella and little Ethelinde attended Mrs. Fitz-aubin, (who certainly felt the generous motives of her compliance) and was following Marcella and Athwold, when his Lordship appeared; with as much haste as politeness  
could

could well allow, he paid the compliments of the morning to Mrs. Fitzaubin and her sister, and joining Miss Barry, with blended tenderness and respect, while hope and pleasure sparkled in his eyes, offered the support of his arm; she politely declined it, saying, the little ones engaged her; he bowed in obedience to her pleasure, yet as he assisted her into the coach his look was so meek and dejected that she felt something like self reproach, though conscious she acted with rectitude of intention.

During the ride Mrs. Fitzaubin communicated the unpleasing intelligence her husband's letter conveyed, which, with his Lordship's assurances of soon procuring him some permanent establishment, furnished conversation until they arrived at the castle."

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**CHAP. VHI.**

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ON entering the gates of the Castle of Avondale, Miss Barry felt a degree of reverence steal insensibly over her mind, altogether new and indescribable, unless it could be attributed to that awe and veneration with which the mind is generally impressed on surveying the ancient magnificence of a Gothic structure; but her sensations, when beneath the lofty turrets of Avondale, were of so sweet and sacred a nature, that yielding to the pleasing enthusiasm, she unconsciously presented her hand to his Lordship, who, transported with the condescension, led her with rapture to a superb saloon, where morning refreshments

ments, consisting of the choicest delicacies, were served in the most elegant manner.

The polite attentions and friendly promises of his Lordship had in a great degree dispersed the gloom which hung over the spirits of Mrs. Fitzaubin, and her cheerfulness influencing the whole party, after having partook of the collation, they intimated their wish to view the paintings. His Lordship instantly arose to attend them, and to the surprise, though not displeasure of Miss Barry, he led Mrs. Fitzaubin to the grand picture gallery, and seemed anxious to amuse and more particularly engage her. Some beautiful historic pieces attracting Marcella's attention, Miss Barry sauntered to a remote end of the gallery, which opening to a noble arcade induced her to proceed under its stately arches until she reached a small but elegantly ornamented recess; wishing to examine the interior, she raised the latch of a low door and entered; it was a favorite dressing-room of the late Lady Avondale, and contained her own portait and

that of her Lord's, in full length, and between them a beautiful likeness of their little daughter, Elvina. They bore a striking resemblance to the marble figures she had seen on the monument, in the Priory ruins, and she continued to gaze on them with delighted attention until interrupted by the entrance of his Lordship and the rest of the party; he then informed them these pictures were drawn by an eminent artist, a very short time before a fatal accident deprived the world of the brightest ornaments of human nature and conjugal felicity. Lord Avondale returning from a hunt, was thrown from his horse in view of his Lady, and expired on the spot; a few months before she had closed the eyes of her sweet Elvina, and being at the time of her beloved Lord's death far advanced in her pregnancy, the shock proved too severe for her enfeebled spirits, she died in convulsions, and became herself the tomb of her unborn infant.

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His Lordship having obliged them with this short account of Lord and Lady Avondale's unhappy fate, conducted them through the principal apartments of that wing of the castle, and then gallantly led the fair visitors where a superb dinner awaited them: Mrs. Fitzaubin now no longer engaged any particular share of his attention, he was amiably polite to all, yet Miss Barry employed his thoughts, he watched her every look, and when she spoke listened with rapture.

That his Lordship may not be accused of caprice, it is necessary to repeat his conversation with Mrs. Fitzaubin, on a subject which alone could have detained him from the presence of his fair enslaver. After having disclosed his passion, which he declared not the less pure and ardent for being sudden, he entreated, in the most energetic terms, her influence and interest with her beautiful relation in his favor, assured her that he placed every future hope of happiness in the honor of being allied to her family, a family he should

ever consider as his own, and promote its welfare with all the zeal of esteem, gratitude, and friendship.

Mrs. Fitzaubin, without the least hesitation, related all she knew respecting the unknown beauty, confessed herself a stranger to her family and circumstances, at the same time generously said, notwithstanding the deep mystery in which she involved her fate, the modesty of her manners, and the nobleness of her sentiments, proclaimed her as pure in mind as she was lovely in person; and she doubted not, could she be prevailed on to disclose her circumstances and sorrows, that the one would display her virtues in the fairest light, and the other prove her seclusion from the world both discreet and laudable.

Astonishment for a time rendered his Lordship mute and immoveable, but on recovering the power of speech, with all the enthusiastic warmth of love and generosity he cried, "Not your relation! then no matter whose;

whose ; however poor, unfortunate, and friendless, she may prove, these arms, this heart, shall shield her evermore ; no care shall reach her, nor no fear disturb her, which my love can ward, if she vouchsafes to bless me with the endearing name of husband : To raise dejected merit, to cheer the breaking heart, is precious in the sight of heaven, and Oh ! how great, how sweet the task to wipe the tears of virtuous sorrow from the eye of helpless innocence, and unprotected beauty ! More than ever I conjure you, dearest Madam," he continued, "represent my ardent wishes to your too lovely friend, plead for a heart too full, too much attached to speak its meaning."

Mrs. Fitzaubin attempted not to interrupt him, nor when emotion had prevented further speech, had she courage to inform him of Miss Barry's sentiments respecting matrimony ; leaving therefore an explanation to some future period, which she knew would come too soon for the happiness of the amiable

able youth, with a sincere assurance that nothing within the limits of her power should be neglected to promote his generous designs, she motioned to rejoin her friend and sister. Though Mrs. Fitzaubin's conversation with Lord Avondale had given no encouragement to hope, it had offered as little reason for despair; therefore the most pleasurable sensations occupied his Lordship during the day; hope, with all its fairy train of images, had lulled his senses in the most illusive dream; and, in idea, he beheld the father and the mother of Miss Barry, cheered in the evening of a stormy life by his unremitting care; beheld the young Athwold and Ethelinde placed in a situation gratifying to their charming sister, and lastly pictured himself the happy, the adoring husband: This harmony of mind so happily influenced his manners, that he appeared formed to captivate the feeling heart; Mrs. Fitzaubin was delighted, Marcella pleased, and even Miss Barry could not refuse him an admiring approbation.

The evening proving invitingly fine, a walk in the park was proposed, when all assenting they set out, and though his Lordship strove to dispense his attentions equally, still he was rivetted to the side of Miss Barry, and by every delicate hint endeavored to demonstrate the purity of his regard without alarming her nice pride by too precipitate a declaration, while she listened with a complacency, which, when she considered her own sentiments and situation, she deemed far from being unreprehensible, and was turning the conversation to some less interesting topic, when the young Athwold, who only for a moment had quitted the careful hand of Marcella, approaching too near the brink of the river, which meandered through the park, his foot slipped, he fell, and in an instant was lost to their view.

Miss Barry beheld him fall, shrieked, my Athwold! and remained immoveable: Not so Lord Avondale, who leaving Miss Barry to the care of her friends, regardless of dan-

ger, plunged in after the boy; the stream in this part ran deep and rapid, and a little lower down formed itself into a black and fearful vortex, upon the surface of which rose the poor Athwold, just as the current had bore Lord Avondale within reach of him; he caught his frock, gasped for breath, and in a moment both sunk together. In a little after they re-appeared, his Lordship still holding the child in one hand, and with the other clinging to the sedges which grew on the margin of the river—he seemed fainting, almost exhausted, yet he struggled, and forcing his way through the weeds, reached the bank, when an instant longer had numbered them both with the dead.

Though speechless, Miss Barry had remained perfectly sensible to the magnanimity, danger, and exertion of his Lordship, and no sooner was she assured that the child still breathed, than with frantic joy she threw herself at his Lordship's feet, and clasping his

his knees, blessed him by the name of dear and beloved preserver of her Athwold.

Exhausted as was the strength and spirits of Lord Avondale, the joy, gratitude, and effusions of Miss Barry revived them, while the soft pressure of her hands, and the fervour with which she invoked blessings on him, transported his enfeebled senses to a degree of rapture beyond the line of pleasure; sinking on his knees, partly through weakness, yet more from inclination, he uttered the most tender congratulations on the safety of her brother, and ventured to assure her, that as his every thought was devoted to her, and his every hope of peace depended on her condescension, the effort he had made to spare her breast a pang was a feeble testimony of how much dearer than life he considered her wishes: The warmth and very explicit expressions of his Lordship awakened the recollection of Miss Barry, and in reflecting on the disappointment she was doomed to give his generous disinterested heart, forgot

got a large portion of her joy for the safety of Athwold.

The castle being nearer by some miles than the mansion of Mrs. Fitzaubin, and dry clothes being indispensibly necessary as well for the child as his Lordship, at the united request of her friends, and pressing entreaties of her Athwold's kind preserver, Miss Barry returned to the castle for the night, and having seen the child laid in a warm bed, left him to the care of a female servant, and returned to the supper-room.

The desert was scarcely set upon the table, when, to the concern of all, his Lordship was observed to change colour, was seized with cold shiverings, respired with difficulty, and spoke with alarming incoherence; a domestic was instantly dispatched for an apothecary, at the nearest town, who on his arrival declared the arm of Lord Avondale to be dangerously dislocated, and that he shewed every symptom portending a high fever; morning

morning verified this opinion ; the concealed agony of his arm being added to the sudden chill of the water, had so agitated and turned the mass of blood, that it occasioned a violent fever, which in a few days reduced the insensible patient to the brink of death.

Gratitude, humanity, anxiety, inclination, all demanding the unremitting attendance of Miss Barry, the ladies resolved to reside at the castle until the disorder of his Lordship reached its crisis : They administered his medicines, watched his painful restless hours, and never left his apartment except when the nurse's care alone was necessary.

The Doctor soon pronounced his life very near a close, and Mrs. Fitzaubin thought it proper to acquaint Lord and Lady Glenroy with his condition, and having ordered materials for writing, was commencing her letter when the Doctor entered, and hearing her intention, advised her to defer her purpose, as a very few hours would decide his  
Lordship

Lordship's fate, and spare his family at least the anguish of suspense. Mrs. Fitzaubin acquiesced, and when the Doctor retired to take some refreshment, with her sister, and the disconsolate Miss Barry, she hung over the bed, awaiting with trembling anxiety the eventful moment; his heavy eyes were almost closed, he breathed quick, the dews of death hung chill upon his pallid brow, and hardly could his quivering lips receive the last efforts of human skill, though offered by the hand of his adored Miss Barry.

This was his condition, when a sudden change in his countenance alarming Mrs. Fitzaubin, she started, and cried, 'he is gone.' "Yes," said Miss Barry, in a calm despairing accent, "yes, he shares the fate of — Did I not tell you the disastrous fate attending those that —" Here utterance failed, a tear stole down her cheek, she sobbed, and then resumed, "Fly me, dear Mrs. Fitzaubin, fly a contagion which ere long will reach your heart!" She ceased, interrupted by the repeated

peated starts and groans of the patient, and pressing his cold clammy hand to her bosom, gazed on his altered face, and, weeping bitterly, exclaimed, "Poor, poor Avondale! why did you know me?" In that moment he opened his eyes, looked fondly on her, and gently returning her pressure, sunk into a profound sleep, from which he did not awake for many hours; when he did he was sensible and composed, and the Doctor declaring the fever gone, pronounced him out of danger, if kept quiet and easy: Turning then to Miss Barry, with a look and a tone inexplicable to her unsuspecting mind, he added, "Your attentions, fair lady, will have more efficacy now than all the healing cordials in my shop; but don't you be too bountiful of your favors, yet awhile; are you," continued he, eyeing her with impertinent curiosity, "are you acquainted with Lady Glenroy?"

Notwithstanding the innocence of Miss Barry, the Doctor's words, and yet more his manner, conveyed an implication painful to her

her mind, and she feared her attendance at the castle, and anxiety for his Lordship, had given rise to a suspicion, which kindled a deep blush in her modest face, and involved her in such embarrassing reflections, that she was totally unable to answer: Mrs. Fitzaubin perceiving her confusion, with much severity of aspect, replied, that Miss Barry, as yet, was not honored with the acquaintance of Lady Glenroy, and that her visit to the castle was under her protection; she then added, that her attendance on his Lordship resulted from a benevolence and gratitude which deemed it the duty of humanity, as his illness was occasioned by the preservation of her brother. The Doctor bowed, and with all the assumed consequence of the village apothecary, proud of his own discernment, said, it was no doubt great on both sides, and with a supercilious smile departed, inwardly piqued at the sharp manner of Mrs. Fitzaubin.

During the remainder of the day the most distressing ideas agitated the mind of Miss Barry,

Barry, and the more she reflected on the apothecary's insinuations, the more she considered the indelicacy and impropriety of her situation; should it transpire, what construction might not the ill nature of a suspicious world put upon it, a world but too ready to blacken the fairest reputation, and from the slander of which the purity of snow can scarce render a female character secure; should then her attendance on Lord Avondale, and her anxiety for his recovery be known, what might not the jealous honor of a friend suppose?—The vindictive malice of an enemy imagine? True, Lord Avondale could awe the apothecary to silence, but would not the very desire of concealment convey a tacit acknowledgment of conscious wrong, if not of actual guilt? And might not a smile, a hint, a very nothing, artfully insinuated, do more essential harm, than the whole candidly disclosed? Yes. Then to prevent the evil spreading farther, (thought Miss Barry) I will leave the castle to morrow.

She

She then threw herself on the bed, if possible to compose her spirits, and refresh her almost exhausted frame; sleep came not at her invocation, and long she lay ruminating on the past, the present, and the future, until pleasantly interrupted by a soft strain of music sounding from a distant part of the castle; she listened, with attention listened, 'till the last sounds died away in a sweet murmuring cadence.

I have heard, thought she, of tokens and forebodings of approaching death, dear Avondale! do these harmonious strains predict thy early fate; or doth some gentle being, now an angel, still delight to hover round these antique towers, and sooth the sorrowing spirit with celestial sounds. A sacred calm had now taken possession of her senses, and listening if possible again to hear the enchanting strain, she was surprised, and rather alarmed at hearing a foot near her chamber; she called, but no one answered, and it was then the stories of the castle being haunted broke on her

her remembrance, yet unconscious of injury either to the living or the dead, she still was fearless, and dropping soon into a sweet sleep, awoke not 'till the housekeeper entered her chamber, to dress her little favorites, Athwold and Ethelinde.

Notwithstanding the concealed sorrows which preyed on the mind of Miss Barry, and the anxiety she felt for the recovery of Lord Avondale, the music, and passing steps she had heard in the night, were the first thoughts that occurred in the morning, and while Mrs. Barlowe was dressing the children, she inquired whether the servants of the castle had not been up late. "No, Madam," said the housekeeper. "No!" repeated Miss Barry, "that is very strange then what I heard during the night."—"Heard, Madam," interrupted Mrs. Barlowe, in visible confusion, "heard—you could have heard—I believe the servants were up." Her embarrassed manner, her tremulous voice, escaped not the observation of Miss Barry; and with a faint

smile she said, "I would not increase your apparent uneasiness, my good friend, nor do I know why the airy beings who hold their nocturnal revels in this old castle should affect you." "Ah! Madam," replied the good woman, a tear stealing down her cheek, "you know not indeed,—Lady Avondale, my lady, was —" Here the entrance of a servant to inform Miss Barry that Mrs. Fitz-aubin waited breakfast for her, in his Lordship's apartment, put an end to the conversation, yet so very interesting was the subject, that she resolved the first convenient opportunity to request some further explanation.

When she entered Lord Avondale's room, he was quiet and apparently slumbering, and on her friends expressing the lively pleasure they felt at his unexpected recovery, she replied, they could not doubt that her satisfaction was at least equal, but that now he was declared free from danger, and could be left with safety to the care of the domestics,

the

she thought it would be prudent and right to quit the castle, as so long a residence in it might occasion conjectures more distressing and humiliating than even the insinuations of the Doctor: Marcella coinciding with Miss Barry, her sister promised to return home next day, and inform his Lordship of their intention some time during the evening; that proved unnecessary, for his Lordship being awake, had listened attentively to every word, and when Mrs. Fitzaubin finished her sentence, in a weak dejected voice he exclaimed, "And are you, my kind, my best friend, to be awed. Your conduct directed by the illiberality of a man of confined ideas? Would you leave me, after preserving my life by your generous cares? Would you render that life a hated burthen, by depriving me of the only object that can render it desirable? Ah! Miss Barry," he continued with increasing energy, "sweet arbitress of my fate, whose remembered blessing sooths my spirit and enlivens it with hope, vouchsafe to silence each emboldened tongue, by giving me a legal claim to

that soft care which charmed me back to earth, when entering on eternity."

Mrs. Fitzaubin knew not how to act; she feared an explanation, in his present weak state would be attended with fatal consequences; and to delude him with false hopes was repugnant to her natural sincerity; she approved of Miss Barry's intention, yet trembling with apprehension lest it should occasion a relapse in his Lordship, she remained in painful hesitating embarrassment, until Miss Barry herself arose, when approaching the bed with a mild becoming dignity, in a compassionating voice she assured him, that if her presence for a few days longer could contribute to his recovery, she was too sensible of the magnitude of her obligations to refuse it: "It is not, my Lord," continued she, "altogether the censure of the world I dread, honored with the protection of Mrs. Fitzaubin, that might easily be refuted; it is the accusing monitor within, that tells me I am wrong, and should become still more reprehensible in

encouraging your Lordship to hope for what is not in my power to bestow; spare me, then further importunity, and when you have regained strength to listen, and I composure to relate, your own heart shall decide whither I am an object of love for Lord Avondale."

She ceased, unable to proceed, when his Lordship, inspired with a sad presentiment, and with an emotion bordering on agony, conjured her, as she valued his reason, or his life, to satisfy one maddening doubt, and then he would await her pleasure with patient resignation. "Say," cried he, in a solemn voice, "has some happier man ——" The closing words died inarticulate on his lips, while his languid eye looked mournfully wishful for an answer to the unfinished question.

The heart of Miss Barry explained the rest and felt the wound she was obliged to inflict; trembling she raised his hand, feebly pressed it, looked pitying on him, and in a voice scarce audible, said, "I am—I am a wife, long

since a wedded wife, and mother to young Athwold and his sister." The pale face of Lord Avondale assumed a yet paler hue, his poor emaciated frame shook with agitation, and frequent convulsive gasps bursting from his bosom, threatened instant dissolution.

The astonished Mrs. Fitzaubin sat lost in thought, and totally unable to offer any assistance; Miss Barry still held his Lordship's hand, and only Marcella had the power to be usefully active; she bathed his temples, and administering some drops, in a few moments he became rather more composed, and regained sufficient fortitude to say, while he tremblingly resigned Miss Barry's hand, "you are a wife, yet ever must my heart reverence and esteem what I must no more presume to love; still, Madam, to the latest hour of hated lingering life, I shall have no will but yours; to worship you at humble distance shall ever be my pleasure, to emulate your virtues my only pride, and to cherish the idea of your friendship the only good my cruel destiny has

has left me. Farewell, then, sweet excellence, to night, some other opportunity you may indulge me with your confidence, and vouchsafe to believe, though lost to hope and happiness myself, your honor, safety, wishes, and repose, will ever interest me, and be my dearest considerations; your friends shall be mine, and your children cherished, loved, as if my own."

Heavy sighs burst from the bosom of our poor heroine, she essayed to speak, but in vain; and struggling with the sad variety of her feelings, she arose, cast a silent yet expressive look on Lord Avondale, and leaning on the arm of Marcella, left his presence: Having retired to her apartment, she folded the infants to her afflicted desponding bosom, and passed the lingering night in weeping.

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**CHAP. IX.**

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SEVERAL days now past at the castle, and in a serenity little to be expected, the different circumstances of the inhabitants considered; even the health and spirits of Lord Avondale appeared to mend, his passion for Miss Barry ever pure, exalted, and disinterested, gradually sunk into a warm, tender, and enlivened friendship; and now that every glimmering of hope was extinct, he viewed her as the fairest and most perfect of heaven's works, and esteemed one approving smile from her beyond every other gratification the world could offer.

His mind, ever touched with a glow of the enthusiast, now indulged still more the romantic,

mantic, which he, terming the sublime, resolved to devote his future days to the contemplation and service of her he loved; and as she confessed herself unfortunate, make every exertion to restore her to peace and happiness, when her promised confidence instructed him how. Miss Barry on the other hand felt for his Lordship the innocent affection of a sister, enlivened by gratitude, and supported by an esteem which his many virtues claimed; she had no longer a pang to inflict on him, the bitterness of rejecting a worthy attached heart was over, and now that she beheld him rising superior to the indulgence of wrong placed love, and assuming if he had not attained the composure of a heart resigned, her own was relieved from an inconceivable pressure, and her spirits became more tranquillized; and as from principles firm and elevated as his Lordship's she had no dark insidious purposes to dread, she conversed with an amiable freedom, and treated him with an unreserved kindness, which at once displayed the ingenuousness and recti-

rude of her own mind, and her cheerful confidence in him.

His Lordship had recovered sufficient strength to use gentle exercise, and the ladies were preparing to return to their own little peaceful mansion, when letters arrived from Lady Glenroy, informing her son, he might expect her and family, with a select party, within a week at the castle. Much as his Lordship had desired this visit, he now considered it as an unpleasant interruption to his projected plan of life, he would be under disagreeable restraint, it would unavoidably deprive him of many hours society with Miss Barry, for the loss of which satisfaction nothing earthly could recompense him, but it was irremediable, and to divert the chagrin the reflection visibly caused, Mrs. Fitzaubin gently reminded Miss Barry of her promise, to relate the incidents of her life.

Tenderly impatient as was Lord Avondale, to hear this history, an history so unpropitious

pitious to his hopes, he had never presumed to solicit it; and even now, fearful of offending, with much humility united in the request of Mrs. Fitzaubin. Miss Barry offered no objection, but entreated the indulgence of delay until next morning, when she should have arranged some circumstances that required a little recollection.

To recover if possible from a lowness and depression, which had imperceptibly crept over her senses, towards the close of day she descended to the castle gardens; as she entered a beautiful labyrinth the sun was sinking beneath the lofty mountains, gilding with a mild radiance the surrounding scene; she wandered pensively through the fragrant groves, enjoying the delightful calm in which nature lay reposed, until sober evening with its dusky mantle was involving all in its sombre shade, it was then that a few drops of rain falling, induced her to hasten for shelter to an old building, which appeared among a tuft of trees, at no great distance. It was a half ru-

ined gothic temple, dedicated to innocence; she entered by a recess beautifully romantic, yet very gloomy, and from its desolate neglected condition within, it appeared rather left there as a good point of view from the windows in the eastern wing of the castle, than as any embellishment to the gardens; some tattered half faded paintings still remained hanging on the mouldering walls, and she was gazing at the portrait of a child, which she imagined resembled her little Ethelinde, when a deep sigh made her start; she turned round and heard a foot, as if close to her, yet beheld nothing: She traversed the temple in wonder, and not without fear, when the sigh returned more heavy, was repeated, and then followed by the murmur of a low voice; she listened as if to catch an angel's whisper, and heard, in half repressed accents, the words, "Peace, peace be unto thee—rest—spirit—Ayondale!"

Amazement not unmixed with terror now suspended the power of motion; she heard  
the

the voice yet knew not whence it came; the words were mystic and impenetrable, and whether uttered by the living or the dead equally inexplicable: The voice continued to pronounce strange incoherent words, until at length the floor of the building shook, and on raising her eyes, she beheld a figure standing near the centre of the temple, the glimpse she had was transient, for in an instant it disappeared.

"God of my life!" exclaimed she, gasping, "why doth this mysterious form obtrude on me, I never did it wrong? Oh! universal Being, whither comes it?" She would have knelt, but perceiving the phantom reappear, she darted from the temple, and flew with rapidity towards the castle. In her terror she had taken the wrong way, and bewildered herself in the intricate paths of the garden; she knew not how to turn, and was considering the various walks in the labyrinth, when again she beheld a figure: She stood as if transfixed, while it continued to gradually approach

approach her: "Surely," cried she, "some restless spirit haunts these wide domains, else I am presaged with yet unfelt, unknown calamities." The figure had now advanced before her, when transported beyond the fears of danger, in a sort of frenzy, she shrieked, darted forward, and clasped the seeming spectre.

It was Mrs. Barlowe, taking a solitary evening walk. "Oh! God, cried Miss Barry, sinking in her arms for support, "Oh! God, I thought you was—" "Was what?" interrupted the housekeeper with quickness. "Was," rejoined Miss Barry, "was the spirit I have seen—so often heard." "The spirit!" repeated Mrs. Barlowe, "then you have seen it?" "I think—I know I have," replied she, a little recovered from her panic, and leaning on her as they proceeded towards the castle, "but who it is, or wherefore it appears, I still am ignorant."

"Your

“Your spirits are depressed, dear Madam,” said Mrs. Barlowe, trembling excessively, apparently declining the subject, and further explanation, “your spirits are very weak, and when the mind is melancholy, superstition usurps but too much power; your excellent understanding will scarce admit a probability of supernatural appearances, not but what I allow there are a great many silly tales of Avondale being haunted, and by many too much credited; some say the late Lord’s father buried an immense treasure in the old Priory, and falling in battle, cannot rest until his descendants have discovered it; others say, (here her voice grew tremulous) that my beloved Lady, for some reason is unquiet; but it is more generally believed, that the Castle and Priory have been disturbed for some centuries by the discontented spirits of —: But, Madam, the night air is cold, allow me to attend you in, and I will shew you a very ancient, and, to the Avondale family, a very valuable manuscript, more explanatory than any account I can give.”

Impa-

Impatient to gratify her curiosity, and if possible either remove her superstitious fears, or more reasonably account for them, Miss Barry remained silent, as to her evening adventure in the ruined temple, and pleading indisposition, wished her friends an early good night, and retired to her chamber, where she was soon attended by Mrs. Barlowe, who presenting her the promised manuscript, as if to avoid embarrassing questions, paid the devoirs of the evening, and immediately withdrew.

On the back of the manuscript, in a different hand was written,

THE FATE OF ATHWOLD AND ELFRIDA.

“An early and untimely death punished an early crime—rest, rest unquiet spirits, and disturb no more,—no longer glide so piteous round these antique towers—no longer wander through these dreary tombs, nor torture future ages as ye have done a sorrowing mother.”

“Spirits of my children, cease to rend my  
widowed heart!—Be still, Oh! Athwold and  
Elfrida, guilt divided ye on earth, Christ and  
his mercy join your souls above, farewell”

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**D**O not you see yon castle fair,  
That stands upon the brow?  
Where many a blast hath shook the trees,  
Waving them to and fro.

My love lives in yon castle fair,  
That stands upon the brow,  
Where many a blast has shook the trees,  
Waving them to and fro.

My love he is a valiant knight,  
And beauteous to behold,  
And many a lady sighs for him,  
With lands and heaps of gold.

My love he has an honied tongue,  
And lacks not land or gold,  
But he will have a lady fair,  
And beauteous to behold.

My love he has an honied tongue,  
 And takes me on his knee;  
 And sweetly speaks, and sweetly smiles,  
 And sweetly kisses me.

The haughty Earl, his father, bold,  
 Full six months has been dead,  
 And full six months before that time,  
 He vow'd he would me wed.

The haughty Earl, his father bold,  
 Vow'd me he should not wed,  
 But my love vow'd he surely would,  
 When he approach'd my bed.

Then up betimes, my virgins all,  
 And 'ere 'tis break of day,  
 For my young Earl to-morrow comes  
 To fetch his bride away.

Then up betimes, my virgins all,  
 And braid my yellow hair,  
 And ere I hear his bugle horn,  
 Make me look fresh and fair.

And tie the bracelets round my arms,  
 Which my young Earl hath sent,  
 They're precious gifts, they're tokens true,  
 That I shall ne'er be shent.\*

\* Disgraced, blamed, reproached.—*Shakespeare.*

Then lie thee still, my precious babe,

I feel thee spring for joy,

That ere to-morrow's sun shall set,

Thou'lt be thy father's boy.

Then lie thee still my precious babe,

Thou'lt be no bastard born,

Stir not, nor start, 'till thou shalt hear,

The young Earl's bugle horn.

And when thou hear'st his bugle horn,

Then spring my babe for joy,

Thy mother then shall be a bride,

And thou thy father's boy.

I would to-morrow night were come,

And I repos'd in bed,

And my silk curtains drawn around,

Though the old Earl be dead.

I would to-morrow night were come,

The young Earl in my arms,

That I might bless his love and truth,

And fear no future harms.

I would to-morrow night were come,

That I might certain be,

My precious babe a father had,

To dandle on his knee.

How can you sleep, my virgins fair,

How can you sleep so found ?

The noisy owl from yonder wall

Makes the old porch resound.

Away, away, thou noisy owl,

And cease thy horrid din,

'Tis not the cheerful sound I want,

To welcome this day in.

Away, away, thou noisy owl,

Disturb not thus my rest,

Thy boding sounds—thy dismal song,

Alarm my anxious breast.

And sleep you still my virgins fair?

And don't you hear the bell?

With hollow voice, and iron tongue,

The midnight hour to tell.

Sleep on, sleep on, my virgins fair,

For innocence can sleep,

Despight of owls, or bells, or ghosts,

While guilt must wake and weep.

Ah! me, who stands at my bed foot?

Earl Athwold, love, is't you?

Nay, prithee stay 'till morrow night,

When I'm your bride so true.

The wind is bleak, the moon is dark,

The frost creeps o'er the grafs,

How didst thou ope the iron gate,

And leap the deep morafs?

How deadly pale thou look'st, my love,

I fear thou art not well,

Speak to me, life, I'll call my maids,

I'll ring the chamber bell.

Why dost thou sigh, why look so fad,

Ah! me, why these alarms?

How cold thou seem'st, come to me love,

Come warm thee in my arms.

Nay, pray thee, pray thee, speak, my love,

Nay, look not such a look!

For just so look'd my brother dear,

When ta'en from the cold brook.

Then pray thee one soft kiss, my life,

I will not bid thee stay;

What means my love? Where dost thou point?

Why becken me away?

Oh! go not thus—stay, Athwold, stay!

Virgins awake, awake!

See where he glides, hark that sad sigh,

Hark! the foundations shake.

Awake, awake, companions dear,

My sister virgins all,

And ring aloud the chamber bell,

Our Lady loud doth call.

Alas! what ails our Lady dear?

And wherefore doth she shake?

And why did she, with voice so sad,

So fearfully awake?

Did ye see nought, my virgins fair,

Did ye not hear a bell?

That with a deep and solemn sound,

Rung out a sad death knell.

Nought have we seen, our Lady dear,

Nor have we heard a bell,

That with a deep and solemn sound

Rung out a sad death knell.

Now Christ preserve your Athwold safe,

And safe make you his bride,

As sure he has not been this night

Standing at your bed side.

Now Christ preserve my Athwold safe,

And safe make me his bride,

For sure I am I saw him now,

Standing at my bed side.

The gates are clos'd, the draw-bridge up.

And yestern Athwold went,  
To the bold Baron Orgar's house,  
That lives by silver Trent.

To the bold Baron Orgar's house,  
With whom to-day he'll come,  
With bugle horn, and merry men,  
To fetch his fair bride home.

Then haste ye, bring my robes so white,  
I can no longer sleep,  
Tho' I'm to be a bride to day,  
I cannot chuse but weep.

And haste ye, bring my kerchief too,  
With which my Athwold dear,  
Oft after he hath kiss'd my cheek,  
Hath wip'd away the tear.

Why com'st thou not, my Athwold dear,  
The twilight leaves the sky,  
Come, blefs me with thy honied tongue,  
Or I shall surely die.

Swift let me hear thy horses hoofs  
Come battering o'er the ground,  
And thy sweet sounding bugle horn,  
That makes the hills resound.

Ah! me, the winds begin to roar

Why doth the tempest rise?

Why doth the thunder's dreadful din

Disturb the peaceful skies?

Red runs the rapid Derwent stream,

Its angry spirits shriek ;

The blood runs chill around my heart,

And pale, pale paints my cheek.

Red runs the rapid Derwent stream,

How shall my lover pass?

Though in the night he op'd the gates,

And leap'd the deep morafs.

Red runs the rapid Derwent stream,

Its angry spirits foam,

Oh! Christ forefend my Athwold safe,

To fetch his fair bride home.

Rejoice, my virgins, don't ye hear

The woods and hills resound,

Do ye not hear the horses' hoofs

Come battering o'er the ground?

Now woe betide the lazy wight,

That watches at the gate,

Why turns he not the iron key,

That makes Earl Athwold wait?

Rejoice, rejoice my darling babe,  
 Now thour't thy mother's joy,  
 For now thy father's dear is come,  
 To make thee his own boy.

She ran to meet her Earl so dear,  
 She tore her filken band,  
 She stumbled at the threshold step,  
 And bruised her lily hand.

She ran to meet her Earl so dear,  
 She trembled at the door,  
 And three large drops of her life blood,  
 Came trickling to the floor.

She ran to meet her Earl so dear,  
 And smiling was her look,  
 She met a pale corpse at the door,  
 Ta'en from the cold, cold brook.

She ran to meet her Earl so dear,  
 She met him at the door,  
 A pale corpse ta'en from the Derwent stream,  
 And not a smiling woer.

They bore the body on a bier,  
 They laid it by her side:  
 She look'd, she sigh'd, she kiss'd his cheek,  
 And look'd, and shriek'd, and dy'd.

In one low grave they both repose,  
Yet oft' a pensive shade,  
Is seen to glide among the tow'rs,  
And with the twilight fade.

Oh! be their early fault forgot,  
Their soft offence forgiv'n,  
And let the erring world remit,  
What pardon meets in heav'n.

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"Athwold!" repeated Miss Barry, sighing as she folded the manuscript, "Athwold, dear name, what powerful sweetness hath that magic sound, yet what is it to me or mine?"

She had continued lost in thought for some time, when a pale light glimmering in a remote corner of the apartment attracted her notice; she looked around, if possible to discover from whence it came, she could see nothing, but heard a distant step, and as it was lost in undistinguishable sound, the light gradually disappeared. Miss Barry felt not much

much alarm, she scarce felt astonishment, for so frequent were these strange circumstances about Avondale, that though reason condemned the idea, she could not altogether banish the belief of unquiet spirits some times appearing among the living; but as conjecture only bewildered her still more, having fervently prayed a blessing for the night, from the universal source of good, she went to bed and composed herself to rest.

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## CHAP. X.

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**N**EXT morning she arose very languid and unrefreshed, and being unable to relate her promised history, if possible to divert her ideas from self and self interested objects; she sought Mrs. Barlowe, and having returned the manuscript, mentioned the light which had appeared in her chamber.

"It is strange," replied the good woman colouring, "for I cannot conceive why you should be molested; whoever it may be that disturbs Avondale; for, to be plain, Madam, as we are on the subject, there is no denying that something is wrong, and never I fear will the unquiet spirit rest until its secret is disclosed; as the family are coming here probably some discovery will be made, and I sincerely wish it, that the amiable Lord Avondale may enjoy his inheritance with all the happiness and honor he merits; for his Lordship is often distressed with the complaints of the servants fears."

Much as Miss Barry wished to know what *was wrong*, she remained silent, delicacy prevented the inquiry, and repressed her curiosity, as it could easily be perceived questions embarrassed Mrs. Barlowe, and gave her evident pain. Being soon joined by Mrs. Fitz-aubin and her sister, she related the strange circumstances, but as they had neither seen nor heard any thing extraordinary, they treated

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ed the story as the offspring of a weak and superstitious brain, and only wondered how a mind so enlightened as hers, could give it even a momentary attention.

Miss Barry blushed from a consciousness of her own credulity, yet persisted in what had been seen and heard by herself: "*there is something wrong*," still vibrated on her ear, but that she should be particularly disturbed, and that which astonished her, and if possible to lose the remembrance, and arrange the incidents of her own little history, towards the evening she set out on her accustomed walk to Basil's cottage.

In passing through the forest she mistook her usual track, and found herself in a romantic winding path, yet not so obscure, but that from vistas opening on different parts she could survey the landscape around and enjoyed with pensive pleasure a bold and superb view of mountains rising in majestic grandeur at some distance, which, with lofty trees,

young plantations, large sheets of water, tremendous natural cascades, and here and there the blackened turrets of Avondale Castle, breaking on the sight, formed a scene at once sublime, beautiful and picturesque.

Ever an enthusiastic admirer of nature's works, she wandered until sober twilight was advancing, and even then was reluctantly emerging from the forest, when suddenly a female figure appeared gliding swiftly before her; she felt a mixed emotion of astonishment and fear, yet knew not why, for the form was neither terrific nor uncommon, and after a moment's gaze, she would have pursued it, but as she followed quick as lightning it fled, and turning a corner, sunk entirely from her view. Ruminating on what she had seen, with a quickened step and palpitating heart she arrived at Basil's. After the usual enquiries were over, she demanded whither there were not more inhabited cottages on the forest, and then related what she had seen, with the circumstance of the figure's sudden  
disap-

disappearance. The mother of Agnes was present, and as Miss Barry spoke her countenance assumed the most ghastly hue, and rising hastily from her chair, with a repressed groan she silently quitted the room. "Oh! dear," cried Agnes, as she closed the door, "how frightened my mother is at spirits, she can't bear to hear them even named." "Spirits!" repeated Miss Barry, "why you cannot think what I saw was a spirit?" "Indeed I do though," replied Agnes, with much simplicity, "for there is little else than troubled dead, and troubled living, together, about Avondale."

"There, my good Agnes, you indeed are right," said Miss Barry, "but, for the dead—" "Yes to be sure," interrupted Agnes, "had not poor Lady Avondale better been dead than living as she lives?" "Lady Avondale living!" cried Miss Barry, in wonder. "It is said she is," returned Agnes, "and that she is confined in the caverns of the castle, and more than that, can never die, no never till—"

Here ceased the communicative tongue of Agnes, for Basil entered to attend Miss Barry to the castle, who returned even more bewildered and perplexed with a confusion of thoughts than she had left it.

Nothing material occurred that evening, Miss Barry, rather fatigued, retired early, and passing a serene night, next morning at the united request of her friends, gratified their longing desire with the following particulars.

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## CHAP. XI.

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"MY perfect seclusion from the world under an assumed name," said Miss Barry, commencing her narrative, "is sufficient conviction that concealment and retirement suit my condition, to request secretly therefore would imply a doubt I do not feel, and

and offer a tacit insult to the honor of my friends of which my nature is incapable." His Lordship was about to offer some assurance, but she prevented him, and with pressed emotion proceeded.

"The earliest scenes remembrance can trace, when the faint impressions of infancy were lost in the dawn of opening reason, I found myself among a number of little beings of various ages, features, and dispositions, yet all were treated with equal humanity, and attended with the same decent plainness. The kindly names of father and of mother were never known within our dwelling, yet the gentlewoman who presided over the humble contented little inhabitants, had power to reward, reprove, and correct, at her discretion, and I think not that she ever abused her trust, for she seemed mild, moderate, and humane; she early taught me the lessons of piety, humility, and meekness, and whether from a partiality so unaccountable in the human mind, or any fancied merit in me, I can-

not decide, but I was happily distinguished by her favor, and held up to my little companions as a pattern for their imitation: Indeed I possessed a natural docility, and willingness to learn, and though all my tasks were confined to a spelling book, sampler, and wheel, my ideas aspired to yet higher improvement, and my heart panted for instruction which my lowly condition promised little hope of ever attaining.

I had nearly completed my seventh year, when one morning our governess entered the play-ground, followed by a lady, the most lovely and prepossessing I had ever seen; my young heart, though ignorant what the sentiment meant, offered her a tribute of involuntary respect, and as she walked round our humble circle I dropped a lowly courtsey; it was one of those quiet bendings of the spirit, expressive of a silent secret reverence; the offering passed neither unnoticed or unrewarded, for the lady stooped, looked kindly on me, and turning to the superior, said, I had

a sweet interesting countenance, inquired my name, then kissed me, and gave me a shilling; and never surely did a holy saint worship a precious relic with more pure devotion than that with which I pressed this valued piece to my lips, and continued to gaze delighted on my treasure till surrounded by my companions, who with rude impetuosity insisted on sharing it. Resolved on the preservation of this shilling, and formed with a heart repugnant to compulsion, I struggled until overpowered by numbers, when it was wrested from me, then retired to a remote corner, and disconsolately mourned my loss, where I was, however, soon observed by a girl who taught the spinning: Taking my hand with great good nature, she inquired the cause of my distress, and on my relating the simple complaint, she wiped my eyes, desired I would be comforted, and my money should be returned; she faithfully kept her promise.

Our governess and the lady re-entered, and I repeated the injury I had sustained; but, the

lady's countenance no longer beamed with its former sweet complacency; she eyed me with something of disdain, and in a severe tone demanded why I did not willingly share the shilling with my little friends? Deeply affected by her altered manner, sobbing, I replied, in my artless language, that I had offered them all the rest of my money, and only wished to keep the shilling to hang at my neck, that I might never forget her pretty likind look when she gave it.

How beautiful that simple trait of artless I gratitude, in one so young and uninformed," said she in a low voice, and without looking or speaking again to me, she retired.

My swelling heart was now full and almost to bursting, and leaning my head on the wall I continued weeping, though why I could not define, for the lost shilling was no more remembered. In a few minutes my grief was interrupted by an order to attend the governess; I obeyed, when the lady raising me in her

her arms, with all her former kindness, asked if I would leave my governess, and young companions, to live with her? How my heart fluttered in that moment! I looked at her I had long revered as a mother, then at my new friend, and covering my face with my hands, wept in silence, till my sweet benefactress pitying my confusion, pressed me to her bosom, and said, if my governess consented that I should live with her, she would take me home and be my Mamma.

How great was my joy and exultation when seated by her in the carriage! only to be equalled by my admiration and wonder when arrived at a house magnificent beyond any thing I could have conceived: She introduced me to her husband, saying, she had brought him a little daughter to adopt; he gazed in my face, and bestowed on me innumerable caresses, while that modesty inherent in the female breast, implanted there by heaven, toward the approaches of insidious man, heightened the glow in my cheeks, on receiving the first kisses I ever had from one of his sex.

My benefactress was of Irish extraction, but her father having unfortunately killed a man in a fatal duel, during her infancy, fled with her and a young brother to Italy, there he resided in safety till she had attained the age of eighteen, when she married Signor Martini, one of the first composers of music: The powerful sweetness of her voice first attracted the admiration of her lover, and soon prepared the way for a mutual attachment: Her brother was an officer in the service of a foreign power, and her father soon after her union paying the debt of nature, she persuaded her husband to leave Italy, and at the period her benevolence removed me from a public charity, they were in very high and merited repute for musical abilities in England.

They had buried two promising children and several years having elapsed, she despaired of more, nor after her generous adoption of me did she ever desire it.

My

My benefactress to a very lovely and interesting figure united a most benevolent and amiable mind, adorned with every gentle grace and feminine accomplishment: Her husband was elegant in his person, his countenance animated, and his manners soft, insinuating, and engaging: They really both doated on me, watched me with the kindest care, enriched my mind with noble sentiments, and in every respect formed me to support the most elevated conditions in life; I was their child, their Ethelinde, and could I have ceased to remember the humble state from which my benefactress took me, I had believed they were my parents; often I inquired, with an anxious heaviness I could not restrain, from whence I sprung, my real name, (for they had given me that of Martini) and why, and by whom my youth was devoted to public parish charity? Never did her benignant countenance wear a frown but on these occasions, when with severity of aspect she would silence my demands, saying, it was the will of heaven I should be cast upon the  
care

care of strangers, and unless I was wearied, discontented with her protection, and murmured at the fate allotted me, never to distress her with inquiries more: These repeated prohibitions at length silenced me, when to erase the painful impression the remembrance of early desertion had occasioned on my mind, she introduced me rather sooner than she intended to the world, and in a circle of well selected friends, rational amusements, and fashionable company, I ceased to murmur at my first forsaken state, and to her infinite satisfaction returned to my former studies with all my accustomed attention and vivacity.

At this period I had nearly reached my fifteenth year; nature, alas! had been but too bounteous in distributing her favors for my peace, and I was reputed charming. Beauty is too often a fatal possession, the first step to female destruction, and to the indigent and unprotected the wreck of happiness if not of honor.

The

The young Earl of St. Clair had much about that period returned from the tour of Europe, and having letters from Malta for Signora Martini, waited on her with them; this visit commenced an acquaintance, an intimacy ensued, and his Lordship became almost an inmate in the house. He possessed all the virtues that could dignify the human kind, and youth and a happy vivacity gave added charms to a face and person altogether faultless; the winning softness, elegance, and dignity, of his voice and manner, stole imperceptibly on the senses, and took possession of the heart, before the danger was suspected. He soon distinguished me by every respectful and tender attention, condescended to be my instructor, and delighted in my improvement; honored me with encouraging approbation, when merited, and what still more demonstrated that pure esteem, the base of perfect love, gently yet firmly reprov'd when he perceived the slightest error, either in my sentiments, conduct, or disposition.

Thus

Thus the great, admired St. Clair vouchsafed to be my monitor, and formed my heart 'till it was all his own, for insensible indeed must I have been to perfection, to a friend's solicitude, and a lover's care, had I unmoved received his many proofs of tenderness, esteem, and interest in my welfare.

Thus ten months elapsed, and still he never mentioned love, but was the watchful guardian, and the nice observer, while the superior dignity of his own demeanour, and delicacy of address to me, repulsed the forward attentions and unmeaning adulation of a fluttering, silly, worthless crowd, and prevented them from contaminating the purity of her mind, whom he designed one day to honor with his hand and title.

His Lordship was often accompanied by a Mr. Bothwel, whom he introduced as a very valued friend; he was certainly handsome and agreeable, but possessed a boldness and freedom, that though I wished and endeavoured

deavoured to respect him as the friend of St. Clair, my heart revolted, refused its suffrage, and I turned with silent disgust from his familiarity.

During this time my beloved benefactress gloried in the attachment Lord St. Clair evinced for her favorite, and as she knew the rectitude of his principles, and the sincerity of his generous passion, gave him every delicate encouragement, at the same time candidly informed him, that I was totally unconnected, unfriended, and probably of mean uncertain birth. His noble soul little regarded the forms and considerations which govern the generality of mankind, and guide their sentiments in marriage treaties; he esteemed disinterested affection and unblemished honor superior and preferable to the dazzling advantages of birth, fortune, and fashion: But he was still a minor, and much dependant on a proud ambitious mother, even when of age, and wished not to disclose his sentiments to me until he could make a legal offer

offer of his hand, and influence his parent in my favor; but his kind intentions were interrupted, and circumstances unhappy as unexpected turned the current of our fate into less quiet and unpropitious channels.

Signor Martini for some time appeared sinking beneath the pressure of a lingering disorder which overwhelmed him with melancholy, and reduced him to the gates of death. With agony inexpressible his affectionate wife beheld his declining state; medical aid proved vain, and his depression reached an alarming crisis, when as the last remedy human aid could offer, he was ordered to the German Spa, where it was hoped a diversity of objects, and total change of scene, would effect a favorable change. I shared, sincerely shared, the sorrow of my benefactress, yet repressed my anguish in her presence, as it would have added to that affliction I wished to diminish; but when I could prevail on her to retire and take refreshment or repose, and leave me to watch in the gloomy

gloomy chamber of Martini, all his remembered benefits and kindneſſes would burſt on my mind, and the tide of gratitude and anguiſh flow from my eyes.

One evening, after allowing free indulgence to my grief, I approached his bed, he appeared to ſleep, I knelt beſide him, and with fervor offered a prayer at the throne of mercy for his recovery : I had cloſed my ſupplication, and in riſing from my knees ſoftly raiſed his hand, and preſſed it with filial warmth to my lips ; at that moment he opened his eyes, and gently drawing me towards him, in a tremulous, weak and dejected voice he aſked, if my prayer was breathed with ſincerity ; if indeed I wiſhed his recovery ? With my breaſt glowing with innocent artleſs affection, I replied, can my dear Signor doubt the gratitude and love of his poor Ethelinde ? “ My Ethelinde ! ” repeated he, “ wert thou mine indeed ! — ” The wildneſs of his looks alarming me, I would have left him and ſought the Signora, but he forcibly

detained me 'till he confessed having long indulged a guilty passion, and that his life depended on a return."

"Terrified, and supposing him delirious, again I struggled to disengage myself from his grasp, and summon help; but passion giving him added strength, he rudely held me, and shocked my soul with the base repetition: My brain seemed bursting, my heart was agonized by varied torture, never felt before, and while he vowed, impiously vowed that I should never wed St. Clair, he proceeded to freedoms, which, awakening every dormant passion gratitude had lulled, with frenzy I broke from him, and rushed from his then detested presence.

In the anti-chamber I met the Signora: Starting at my agitated appearance, she eagerly inquired for Martini: I was unable to reply, but sighed convulsively, sunk insensibly at her feet: On my recovery I found myself reclined on a sofa, with her fondly watching

watching me on one side, and St. Clair, with the most tender anguish in his expressive countenance, hanging over me on the other. My benefactress embracing me with soothing kindness, asked what had caused so sudden an illness, and with a confusion unnoticed by her, I replied, a faintness from the heat and closeness of the room, which she believing, left me with my lover, and retired to attend her ungrateful husband.

How acute my feelings must have been, when even the cherub voice of my St. Clair could hardly soothe them! My indisposition had awakened all his tenderness, and overpowering every resolution, in the softest whispers he avowed his love, explained his reasons for delay, and promised everlasting constancy, truth and adoration.

Pure and delightful were my emotions! Much I wished to repose my load of hidden anguish in his dear faithful bosom, and entreat his counsel; but no, I could not expose  
the

the husband of my protecting friend, but yielding to the innocent pleasure which glowed in my breast, I modestly confessed my guiltless regard, and in mutual assurances we passed the happy hour until supper and Signora appeared. During the repast, she mentioned the intended journey to Spa; Lord St. Clair sighed at the idea of separation, hoped the speedy recovery of the Signor would render it short, and thinking repose necessary for me, withdrew at a more early hour than usual. After his departure, Signora renewed her caresses, and said, in my sweet sensibility and attention and in the pleasure my society would afford Martini and herself, in the projected journey, heaven had rewarded her care, and proved her predilection in my favor happy. Good God! how severe was my conflict! Could I encourage the illicit, the avowed passion of my friend's husband, by being the companion of their tour, or was my honor safe in the power of a man, who was forgetful of the merits of a charming wife, all the duties of a husband, and

and what he owed to the friendless orphan of his care and bounty; he whom I had revered as a father, whom I had considered as a friend that would have shielded me from the approach of injury; even he insulted my ears, and offered indignity to my person; in his protection could I be secure? Might he not in some ungoverned hour of passion devote me to destruction; or if not, might not his weakness—wickedness, be discovered, and his estranged heart plunge his amiable wife in wretchedness and despair?—Too sure—I therefore resolved to rather endure the imputation of the most black ingratitude, than hazard either; and in a low faltering voice informed my benefactress that I felt such indescribable reluctance to the idea of the journey, and the presentiment of ill so strongly impressed on my mind, that to all her other kindnesses I entreated she would add that of placing me in some friend's care, or even in servitude, 'till her return.

A moment she gazed in painful astonishment, and, as if she doubted her own senses, desired I would repeat my request—I obeyed; “Poor Ethelinde!” replied she, surveying me with looks more expressive of anguish than anger, (a tear started in her sweet eye, she wiped it away) “Poor Ethelinde! though I may pity the weakness of frail erring nature, in a female breast, I fear your desertion of those who have so fondly loved you, in the hours of affliction, will poorly recommend you to the good St. Clair; may he not doubt your stability in sacred duties, when the ties of gratitude and friendship are forgotten?—But no more, I have done—Yes, Ethelinde, I will board you until I return, and after I return, if that should ever be; for sad reflection would arise, with bitterness arise, and wrung as is my heart, it could not bear to cast reproaches on the long loved Ethelinde!”

Let the mind of sensibility conceive my agony in that trying moment. I gaped to speak, and almost had the bitter truth escaped my

my trembling lips, when reflection dawned, and I could not resolve to inflict more than the pangs she felt for my supposed ingratitude, on her kindly generous heart; I conquered — remained silent — but the effort proved too much for my enfeebled spirits, for, as she arose to leave me, shrieking wildly I threw my arms around her, reason shook upon her throne, my bosom burned, and in a few minutes a raging fever turned my brain to the dreadful abode of wild distraction.

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## CHAP. XII.

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MANY days elapsed and still no hopes of my life could be encouraged; meantime all the tenderness of my benefactress

I 2                      revived,

revived, my danger obliterated all but the remembrance of my duty and affection, and again she became my friend and mother, she watched my suffering hours, and, with my St. Clair, wearied heaven with prayers for the life of Ethelinde ; it was then the sincerity of his regard appeared, then when the lustre of my eyes were sunk in heavy gloom, the glow of my cheek succeeded by an ashy paleness, and all allurements of the senses fled, then the pure nature of his love shone forth, and proved it founded on a better principle than fleeting, fading advantages, for in that condition I was dearer, more interesting to his fond bosom, than when blooming in all the vivacity of happiness and hope.

At length my reason was restored, and returning health seemed to amply repay them for all their care and anguish. During my illness the indisposition of the Signor had increased, for conscious, I suppose, of having occasioned mine, to it was added that torment of the guilty, an accusing spirit. When  
able

able to walk, at the request of my benefactress I attended her to his apartment; he expressed joy at my recovery, but methought his eyes gleamed with savage triumph, that again I was within his power, and might become his victim, which made his professions of regard sound in my ears like the false siren's voice, that lures the listener to destruction.

The journey to Spa had never once been mentioned in my presence since my illness, but I soon perceived preparations making for it, and trembled for the conflict I had still to endure.

One morning that the Signora had ordered the carriage at an earlier hour than usual, she desired I would sit in the Signor's apartment as solitude only gave indulgence to his depression: I bowed assent, though secretly resolved not to obey until Lord St. Clair paid his accustomed visit of the morning, and accompanied me to his chamber; she had,

however, been gone but a short time, when a servant informed me the Signor desired my attendance ; pleading a violent head-ach, I returned my duty, and was sorry indisposition confined me to my room. I acted thus resolutely, judging he scarcely had effrontery to make any complaint to his wife, and had yielded to a painful train of ideas, when my door opened, and, pale and trembling, Martini stood before me. I started at his appearance, but concealing the terror he occasioned, with assumed composure I coolly congratulated him on being able to leave his room : His every feature seemed distorted by internal emotion, his heavy eyes gleamed with horrid passions, and with difficulty could his tottering limbs support his enfeebled frame. Various were the sensations with which he inspired me, but they were all quickly absorbed in those of detestation and contempt, when he repeated, and with hope, his criminal propensity.

Repressing

Repressing my indignation, I remonstrated with him on the enormity of his pursuit, and entreated he would be directed by the native honor of his heart, which, though obscured for a time by the illusions of destructive passion, if he listened and obeyed its mild persuasive dictates, and the voice of reason, he would soon feel a sweeter reward in the conscious approbation of an unfulled mind, than in all the guilty pleasure the possession of his wishes could obtain, and with this superior advantage, that the satisfaction resulting from the one would be bright and lasting, that of the other momentary, and attended by never ceasing remorse and anguish; anguish for having betrayed a forsaken orphan, who revered him as a father, and remorse for deceiving a charming wife, who held him far dearer than existence, and esteemed his heart a richer treasure than the wealth of worlds.

By well dissembled hypocrisy for a moment he deluded me with the idea that my arguments had awakened long slumbering

honor in his bosom; but soon the serpent appeared through the flimsy veil of dissimulation, when he persevered in requesting that I should be the companion of their journey, for had he been sincere, he would rather have approved a measure, that in removing the object of his criminal wishes from his view, gave him opportunity for reflection and perseverance in good resolutions.

“Can you suppose,” replied I, to his reiterated request, “that after having endured the heart-rending yet mild reproach of your amiable wife, sustained the imputation of base ingratitude, and resolved to relinquish the endearing presence of my beloved benefactress, that your persuasions can avail? Forbear, Signor, the futile effort proves you weak as wicked; yet think not my steady purpose indicates a fear of your power, or a doubt of my own—no, I am secure in virtue, firm in honour, and have a guardian vigilant and kind, to shield me from every evil; it is the peace, the comfort of my friend and mother  
that

that I would preserve, preserve at any price less dear than that one treasure she taught me to relinquish but with being. Be convinced then, Sir," added I rising to retire, "that I am determined."

"And so am I," interrupted he, detaining me, while his countenance expressed each horrid purpose, and he drew a knife from his pocket: Agonized, I gazed, gasped, and heaven inspired with strength and resolution superior to my own, seized his arm, raised for self destruction, and wrested from him the fatal weapon; upon that he fled, half frantic, closed his door with violence, and left me struggling with extremity of anguish.

In the contest for the knife I had severely wounded my hand, and being unwilling that either the blood or wound should be seen, lest they should produce inquiry, I quickly changed my dress, and hastened to Signora's medicine closet for a styptic, when in passing through a dressing-room which separated my

apartment from it, I beheld, seated in a disconsolate posture, my dear unhappy benefactress; unhappy, indeed, even to a degree of torture; for, dispatching her business, she had returned almost immediately, and astonished at finding her husband's apartment empty, she was hastening to mine, when hearing me speak with unusual energy, a moment she stopped in the dressing-room. The thunderbolt had less appalled her innocent heart than the words which fell from my lips. Trembling she sunk in a chair; insensibility had been a blessing but it was denied, and in a manner fatal to her peace the mystery of my conduct was unfolded by the perfect discovery of her husband's perfidy and intended baseness.

Her sweet countenance appeared mild, pale, and dejected, but on my entrance it flushed with the deepest crimson, and assumed a faint ray of pleasure; when I approached she opened her arms, and pressing me to her throbbing bosom, exclaimed, "my  
loved

loved, my wronged, my generous Ethelinde! that to spare my breast a pang of sorrow, and conceal the baseness of a greatly erring husband, could meekly, silently endure the bitterness of undeserved reproach; yet I wonder not, too lovely girl, that feminine perfection should attract a heart susceptible as Martini's; no—I but regret he would attempt to dim the brightness of that purity and worth it should have been his pride and pleasure to protect and reverence: I am a woman, Ethelinde, and have my sex's softnesses and weakness, and feel a proud and poignant sorrow that I no more can charm a husband's heart."

Here emotion stopt the power of further utterance, and while I was attempting to sooth her to a state of some composure, Lord St. Clair was announced; alarmed at our mutual distress, for my tears were mingling with her's, he anxiously entreated to be made a sharer of our affliction, when to my unutterable surprise and confusion she related,

with a calm firm voice, all she had heard, feelingly portrayed all I must have suffered, and concluded, saying, his Lordship would be more enviable, and more blest in the possession of a woman adorned with so heroic noble, and generous a nature, than if endowed with those splendid privileges, so valued by the ill judging mercenary world.

How sweet, how gratifying were the tender exulting praises of my lover! How welcome his approbation of my conduct! "Blest and enviable indeed," continued he, gazing enraptured, "how secure in the ennobled principles of such a bride! How serene in the reflection of having entrusted my honor and happiness to the dear care of such a woman! No fear, no doubt, can ever disturb me, for I approved before I loved, and took discerning reason for my guide, and while all the softer passions triumph in my breast, how secure I rest in the conviction that her sanctity of truth, delicacy of sentiment, and purity of honor, will flourish and shine with undiminished

minished lustre, when the brilliancy of those now blooming charms which first attracted my admiring eye, shall fade with the lapse of time, and be almost forgotten; still then, my lovely Ethelinde, shall chaste esteem, tender friendship, and endearing confidence, be our own, cheer the evening of our days on earth, and lead us in a clear unerring path to heaven hereafter."

How delightful had these soft effusions been to my grateful heart, but that I knew them purchased by the bleeding peace of my revered maternal friend; yet the dear sufferer seemed gratified in our triumphant happiness, and pressing our plighted hands with fervour to her bosom, prayed Almighty God to guard and bless us with eternal care and favour.

It was then agreed among us, that no notice should be taken to the Signor of his attempts, or the discovery of them, but that they should as soon as possible set out on their journey,

journey, and I be committed to the care of some confidential friend until their return. Lord St. Clair then took a tender leave, and promised to attend us in the evening.

“Now, my child,” said Signora, after his departure, “now that all painful restraint is banished, between us, I will disclose my future purpose respecting Martini, and hope you will approve it. Though his heart, fascinated by the power of beauty, has wandered far from rectitude and me, I trust it is not altogether lost, but may be yet encouraged back to its forsaken home; the charms I mean to use shall be to wear my Ethelinde’s winning manner, adopt her sentiments, and imitate her sweetness.” “My more than mother cease,” interrupted I, deeply affected by her meekness and humility, “my more than mother, what hath my life been but a poor imperfect imitation of your worth and virtue?” “Well,” returned she hastily, “and you are not the first pupil who has surpassed the teacher, nor can I have a brighter,

brighter sweeter triumph than the contemplation of my Ethelinde's excellence."

Here our conversation ending, we repaired to the dining parlour, and felt some degree of embarrassment on seeing the Signor seated there, but my friend soon recovered herself, and with a kind salute thanked him for the pleasing and unexpected surprise of his presence. He had now practised dissimulation, and with an air perfectly unabashed, received her endearments as if he had deserved them.

When he quitted me with such transports of fury in the morning, I suppose the servants had informed him of his wife's return, and fearing detection (for guilt and cowardice are inseparable companions) he feared her knowing he had quitted his apartment during her absence, might create a degree of suspicion even in her generous breast; he therefore suppressed his passions, and struggling  
with

with his indisposition and terrors, waited her appearance, when her accustomed sweetness of manner calmed every apprehension.

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CHAP. XIII.

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THIS day, so fatal to the peace of my dear Signora, was past by me in a state of more serenity than I had felt for many preceding weeks, and after the coffee was removed, leaving the Signor and his lady to arrange the plan of their expedition, I withdrew to the drawing-room, to await the promised visit of Lord St. Clair.

I had sat but a few minutes when a loud rap announced a visitor, thinking it him I went

went to the door, when to my disappointment I beheld Mr. Bothwel. After a kind inquiry for my health, for I had not seen him a considerable time, he presented a letter from St. Clair; much alarmed I unclosed it: He regretted that at such a period he was under the painful necessity of leaving town, an only and much beloved sister being dangerously ill and desirous of his presence; that he would return the first moment in his power, and requested through the means of his friend Mr. Bothwel, I would inform him where I was situate after the Signora's departure; he also assured me, the moments would be sad and heavy during our separation, but trusted a confidence in the love and constancy of each other would be the mutual support until a happy meeting.

Spite of every effort to restrain them the tears gushed in torrents from my eyes, and I presaged I know not what of evil in this unexpected separation. The lips of Bothwel offered consolation, but methought his looks expressed

expressed a malignant pleasure, and to avoid his presence, for indeed I could not subdue my strong prejudice, I retired to answer the letter of my lover. On my return I found the Signora with Mr. Bothwel, and ere he took his leave, they gave him a billet for Lord St. Clair, acquainting him with my future residence and protectress, and offering every fervent prayer for his prosperity and happiness.

How dreary now appeared my lingering hours! No longer could I hear the enchanting voice of faithful love, no longer listen to the improving sounds of kind instruction, nor behold the endearing presence of St. Clair; to me all had assumed the hue of sadness, and in my selfish sorrow even the sufferings of my benefactress were forgotten until the hour of her departure, when what I felt was surely something like the pang of parting nature.

After a respectful farewell of Martini, in presence of his wife, a compliment he received

ceived with hauteur, and a wish that I might meet a better friend than he had proved, my benefactress conducted me to the house of Mrs. Nelson, a widow lady, of good character and fortune, whom she had known for several years, and who professing much regard and admiration of me, and also entreating the favor of my company when she heard I was not to go, she deemed her a very eligible protectress: To her then she recommended me in the most solemn and affecting manner: "Guard her," cried she with energy, "guard her youth, her innocence, and beauty, from the approach of danger; remember, my friend, I shall, heaven will demand her in safety from your hands, shield her then with the kindest care; you will find her a treasure whose merit and sweetness will amply reward you."

But let me not recall her mournful look, her plaintive voice, when impressing on my cold trembling lips her last salute, still, still the sad, I fear the final farewell, vibrates on  
my

my ear, and awakens all my sorrow, as if it were a few short hours ago: Her loved resemblance, a letter of instruction, and a note of value, in wringing my hands she left with me, knelt and prayed with fervor for my safety, when exhausted and overpowered by painful and various emotions, Mrs. Nelson attended her to the carriage.

Many days after her departure were devoted to grief and melancholy, and, immured in my own chamber, shunned the gay circle which perpetually crowded the mansion of Mrs. Nelson, until, with an air of kindness, she protested I should no longer confine myself, but be introduced to her friends. I had "*that within which passeth shew*," and needed not to assume the semblance of sorrow, but to avoid imputed affectation, I acceded to her wishes, and attended her next public drawing room.

Mrs. Nelson very early in life had been left a widow, with no family, and to one of her

her expensive turn, but a slender jointure; bred with a taste for gaiety and expence, and long accustomed to fashionable, nay dissipated pleasures, she deemed retirement among the greatest of human evils, and being a woman of admirable address, insinuating manners, and a perfect adept in the art of dissimulation, without possessing one real virtue she wore the appearance of many, and supported a fair reputation, not from a love of rectitude, but because it better promoted her plans upon the unsuspecting: No wonder then that so fair, so specious an appearance, imposed on the open innocent nature of my benefactress; for, alas! we find the generous and undesigning are the easiest victims of art and vice.

The company at Mrs. Nelson's were fashionable, and to use the modern phrase, "people whom every body knew." Her petits soupers elegant, and her card tables brilliant and well attended, and I soon discovered that she derived considerable advantages from every fortune, either gained or  
lost

lost at the shrine of the fickle goddess, tho' seldom or never a party herself. Within her gates the mornings were wasted in ennui, or pallid langour, from the fatigues of the preceding evening; the nights spent in scenes of extravagance, polite riot, and fashionable ruin. Oh! how unlike the happy serenity of my former days, when every word from the soft lips of my loved monitress directed some young idea, mended some error, or blending instruction with amusement, cherished the seeds of goodness in my glowing breast, when my St. Clair united in the pleasing task, and made my home a heaven; how sad the contrast! my soul sickened at the view, and turned disgusted from it; yet I suppress my feelings, and, that I might not offend, sometimes went into public and attended Mrs. Nelson's routs.

Almost constantly among the gay visitors who fluttered in this maze of folly, was a Sir William Brandon, a man of immense wealth, unbounded pleasure, and vast profusion; a  
free

free thinker to the utmost extent of the words, a perfect Machiavel in intrigue, and, to sum up his character, an unprincipled libertine professed ; his large command of money gave him but too much power to promote his purposes, and indulge his profligate passions, and, to the sorrow of many an unsuspecting heart, he had been often but too successful in his base pursuits. Such was the man who soon avowed a preference for me : I treated him with all the cold indifference I felt, until his insolence of address and freedom of manner roused the consequence of virtue, when I gently hinted his conduct to Mrs. Nelson, who to my astonishment and disgust laughing replied, that I was a simpleton not to encourage the passion of a fine fellow with a handsome fortune, that he certainly admired me, and would be liberal.

Lost as I long had known Mrs. Nelson's heart to every sentiment of true feminine delicacy, I supposed her not totally depraved in principle, or that she would be the abettor

of indiscretion and vice beneath her own roof. I therefore calmly said, that I must be ungrateful, for that Sir William was an object of the extreme contempt in my idea, and begged she would counsel him to offer his devoirs to some one more sensible of the honor. A Mr. O'Connor was almost the inseparable companion of this Baronet, and but for that circumstance I should have thought him amiable as he was agreeable; many good traits shone through the dark shade fashionable levities had cast over his character, and he seemed to pursue dissipation more to please the humour of his friend, than to gratify any inclination in himself: Sometimes he would rally me on my conquest of Sir William, at others congratulate me, but oftener than either, assume a serious air, sigh and gaze in silence, and practise every little art demonstrative of concealed passion; but totally engaged with ideas far more dear and interesting, the rude freedom of the one, and insidious glances of the other, were equally disregarded.

Not

Not having seen Mr. Bothwell for several days, I began to be rather alarmed, when a letter from him informed me he had joined Lord St. Clair, at Arundel Abbey, by the desire of the Countess his mother; this letter inclosed me one from his Lordship, filled with the tenderest assurances of love and eternal constancy, but as he had some reason to suppose his mother had discovered our attachment, requested that I would not write until he could devise a method to correspond with safety.

This distressing information reached me at a time when the bold importunity of Sir William had determined me, notwithstanding the apparent indelicacy of casting myself entirely on Lord St. Clair's protection, to acquaint him with the hidden character of Mrs. Nelson, and the vicious principles of her visitor, and also obliquely hint that I was subject to indignities from her libertine friends: To add to the dangers and perplexity of my very painful and humiliating condition, a faithful do-

meſtic, left by my dear Signora to attend me, without aſſigning any cauſe for ſuch a ſtep, ſuddenly diſappeared; I certainly regreted his deſertion at ſuch a period, and in ſuch circumſtances, for having been long the confidential ſervant of my friend, and the attendant of my early years in all my little excuſions, I conſidered him as an humble protector, who with his feeble power would both direct and defend me to the utmoſt, if driven to extremity, and I felt as if deprived of a ſupport when he forſook me.

Meantime Sir William was become ſo inſupportably daring, that in plain yet reſpectful terms I told Mrs. Nelson that her own honor and character demanded that ſhe ſhould prohibit his viſits, as the indignity being offered to one under her protection was an inſult to herſelf. With a diſdainful air ſhe replied, that ſhe could not decide whether my inſufferable vanity excited moſt wonder, or contempt; but deſired I might no more moleſt her with complaints ariſing from

from affectation and prudery, or else to a most ridiculous opinion of my own pretty figure, which she assured me was by no means so irresistible as I imagined; but if an unaccountable fancy really possessed Sir William, she could not help saying, a creature unfriended, unknown, and indeed without even a name, was highly honored by any proposal a man of his consequence could offer; she concluded with a sarcastic smile, that if her house was too gay for my very refined notions, she begged leave to inform me her porter should receive orders to open the gates.

I felt not indignation, the woman was fallen beneath resentment, but at one glance of my forlorn and helpless condition my humbled spirit trembled within me, and for a time every reasoning faculty was suspended; tears however, in a short time, relieved the swelling tide of anguish, and gave me composure to reflect, when I was interrupted by the appearance of Sir William. With easy gal-

lantry he reproved my absence from the Opera, and declaring he had quitted both the charms of music and of Mrs. Nelson to pass an hour alone with me, with insulting freedom threw himself on the sofa, and demanded a salute for his reward: That I haughtily repulsed, but his effrontery being matchless, he seized my reluctant hands, and obliged me to listen to a repetition of his detested passion; with difficulty I repressed the pride of insulted honor and oppressed innocence, and affecting an ignorance of his real meaning, I beseeched his generosity would spare me in future, as my hand was solemnly plighted to one whom both sentiment and principle attached me, and whose unbounded confidence I considered injured, by having repeatedly endured the professions of his regard.

“By all the host of angels like yourself,” replied the contemptible wretch, “you delight me, now we meet almost on equal terms, for I am what sententious black robed locusts call betrothed; then let us give the  
present

present hours to joy and pleasure, for never shall the galling chain of any institution bind a heart that beats for love, for liberty, and Ethelinde. From prayers, tears, insolent persuasions, and attempted caresses, at which I shuddered more than if a basilisk had stung, he proceeded with brutal insult to grosser rudeness, but the power of virtue armed me, and twice I had escaped from his loathed grasp, when Mr. O'Connor entered staggering, as I supposed from the effects of wine, humanity induces me charitably to hope so, for sure collusion *never* yet was so infernal. As he approached the spot where I lay, gasping like the helpless lamb beneath the murdering knife, I raised a pitying look—alas! no mild compassion triumphed there, it was unregarded; and Sir William, with his eyes glaring with fierce ungoverned passion, and every feature inflamed with wild impatience, cried in incoherent sentences, “Help me, my friend, O'Connor help me to subdue the vixen beauty, to warm her frozen chastity, to humble her proud virtue, and bring her

kneeling for my favor, then command me everlastingly."

The savage wretch proceeded to assist the horrid purpose; I struggled, shrieked: Oh! heaven, thy angels were in waiting, and tho' unseen, preserved my innocence in that black moment from the power of ruthless demons: I was nearly their victim and undone, for the last faint cry was dying on my quivering lips when a voice (how blessed to my ear!) made my persecutor start; Sir William listened, it drew nearer, and a foot ascending the stair, he rushed with wildness into an adjoining room, and quitted the house; O'Connor had not time to escape, the door burst open, and to my transported view appeared my loved St. Clair.

How sweet, how pure, how tender, was my rapture, when reclined on his dear honest bosom! He soothed my soul to peace and soft composure! Lost in the innocent luxury of mutual endearments, all was nearly forgotten

gotten till O'Connor, who continued speechless and immoveable, recalled our recollection.

With a calm commanding dignity St. Clair desired his name, and an explanation of the scene he had beheld. How mean, how pitiable is the guilty wretch, like the poor criminal condemned, trembling he stood unable to reply; at length convulsive sobs burst from his labouring breast, tears gushed from his eyes, and bending his face to the earth, he replied, "Ask me not what I am, plunge your dagger here—I am a wretch beneath your pity, more beneath your anger, driven by injury, by sharp calamity, I am from honest pride and honor fallen to be a villain, and deserve the death I crave, as the best gift the world can give me, then the innocent:—"

Here his voice faltered, he ceased, and my generous St. Clair viewed him as an object of commiseration. "Poor unhappy man!"

said he, raising him up, "whatever are your crimes, or was your intended guilt, your present state of conscience visits you with bitter retribution; be safe for me, no erring soul shall I precipitate into a dread eternity: Encourage your remorse, and peace attend you, but never provoke me by your presence." O'Connor bowed, unable to reply, and covered with a confusion which indicated his heart not entirely depraved, quitted the room.

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#### CHAP. XIV.

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**W**HEN our own pleasurable sensations on meeting had somewhat subsided, and we had reasoned ourselves into some degree of composure, my trunks were placed on the coach which brought Lord St. Clair, and

and without waiting to reproach Mrs. Nelson for her base conduct, I cast my future fate on the protection of my lover; no anxious, no uneasy thought disturbed me, I knew that truth, honor, and affection, guided every action, and that my happiness and safety were his dearest considerations.

During our ride he told me, that he resolved I should never more be exposed to the dangers and insults I had suffered, as we were on our way to the house of his tutor, whom he had prepared to expect us, and trusted he should be able to persuade him to unite our fate for ever, but if he could not, his intention was to proceed instantly to the borders, and receive the nuptial benediction. I gently dissuaded,—but why conceal it?—The innocent pleasure I felt rendered my remonstrance languid indeed: I had no parent, no friend to consult, I was helpless and alone upon the earth, and much I wanted some kindly bosom interested in me, to repose and shelter my unguarded youth; weak then must

have been my refusal of the beloved being who offered me the dear distinctions of his name and care.

This important point agreed, we conversed of Mrs. Nelson and her visitors, and finding him entirely ignorant of Sir William's influence, suffered him to remain so; for though the humility, contrition, and apparent distress, of Mr. O'Connor had disarmed resentment, and filled his generous heart with pity, I feared the premeditated baseness of Sir William, as it deserved not equal forbearance, would not meet the same lenity, and the existence of St. Clair was too precious to be hazarded in the punishment of a wretch beneath his contempt.

Mr. Bothwell had told him in general terms that I was surrounded with admirers, but that he said, created neither wonder nor anxiety, as he was too well assured of my sincerity and attachment, to entertain the remotest doubt. His happy and unexpected arrival

arrival at Mrs. Nelson's had been occasioned by the affectionate zeal of the faithful domestic, whose mysterious departure I so much regretted; he had overheard a conversation between Mrs. Nelson and some of her dissolute visitors, when a plan was arranged to carry me off, the more secretly to effect their own vile purposes and my destruction; some days had still to elapse, and the faithful creature, without alarming me, hastened to Lord St. Clair with the information of my danger, and he arrived in a happy hour to save me.

These topics, and a thousand nameless tenderesses, only known and felt by the mind of sensibility, beguiled the hours of langour, and made us think little of the fatigue of traveling, and towards the close of next evening we arrived at the parsonage of Mr. Menville.

This gentleman was the orphan son of a high dignitary in the church, and had been educated on the foundation of a celebrated school, where his acquaintance commenced

with Lord St. Clair; they were early attached from a similitude of sentiments, and the virtues approved by one were sure to create a laudable emulation in the other; Mr. Menville being many years older than his Lordship kindly, voluntarily, not only took upon himself the direction of his studies, but became the zealous friend and careful monitor. These services, rendered in a manner which at once commanded reverence and secured esteem, so powerfully engaged all the generous passions of his young pupil, that when his father removed him to college, he entreated he would appoint Mr. Menville his tutor; when the Earl, highly grateful, and sensible of the many advantages his son had attained, and would still derive under his direction, not only acceded to this proposal, but with a liberal allowance made him his companion in the tour of Europe, and promised him his future patronage in the church.

Unfortunately for my St. Clair and his worthy tutor, that great and truly respectable  
nobleman

nobleman paid the debt of nature during their absence ; and such was the power the Countess had acquired over the heart and judgment of the Earl in his declining hours, that he constituted her the unlimited guardian of his son and daughter 'till the age of twenty-five, and even then to forfeit a large portion of their inheritance if they acted contrary to her pleasure.

How fatal when the violent and ambitious are invested with arbitrary power ! Lady St. Clair received her son, on his return, with much apparent affection, promised his wishes every reasonable indulgence, and, with a haughty condescension, thanked Mr. Menville for his care, and added, she would take an opportunity to reward it ; but his noble independent spirit ill supporting her proud imperious manner, he accepted a curacy, and without one murmur at the obscurity of his condition and prospects, by the exertions of his pen, and little income supported himself and an infirm sister with decent neatness.

At

At the period we visited his quiet retirement he was in the pride of life; his figure genteel, his countenance interesting, and his manners, though grave, perfectly agreeable and improving; he possessed a dignity of sentiment, benevolence of heart, and sweetness of temper, which, while they inspired reverence also secured a cheerful confidence, and engaged the warmest esteem: He welcomed Lord St. Clair with all the tenderness of a father, and all the easy freedom of an attached friend; me he received with a kind politeness, viewed me with a mild yet penetrating eye, and when, at St. Clair's request, I related the incidents of my life, with no other embellishment than simple truth, a pitying tear bedewed his manly cheek, and pressing my unresisting hand, turned from me with a painful emotion.

Long he used every argument reason and wisdom could suggest to dissuade my lover from his intended union until of age, when, if he disregarded the wealth in his mother's power

power, he might, conformable to the wise laws of his country, make his own election without dread of reprehension, or the consequences of discovery; but, unmoved as is the mountain's base he remained, and firmly adhering to his purpose, listened to the good man's remonstrances with impatience, and replied with an asperity never before known in his gentle generous nature. At length he closed the debate, saying, the wealth of an empire should never be put in competition with the safety and honor of Ethelinde, that he would no more urge a point that might endanger the interest or injure the prospects of Mr. Menville, his sanction might certainly have that effect, and he would therefore instantly proceed to the borders, and blessed in the possession of his love, calmly meet the utmost fury and vengeance of an indignant disappointed mother.

The resentment of an injured zeal for a moment flushed the cheek of Mr. Menville, but he soon resumed his accustomed serenity,  
and

and mildly replied, Lord St. Clair was little acquainted with either his principles or disposition, if he supposed one selfish fear or interested motive influenced his arguments, and since he was deaf to the voice of reason and friendly counsel, rather than expose him to the consequence of certain and immediate discovery, he consented, on condition that impatience was restrained, and time allowed for the sacred ceremony being performed in a legal manner, and that, if possible, it should be concealed until Lady St. Clair's approbation could be obtained, or the age of twenty-five allowed him to avow it openly, without detriment to the fortune of his descendants.

The ecstasy of St. Clair was unbounded, he acceded to his propositions, vowed secrecy, and rushing into his arms called him by every endearing appellation the transport of the moment could dictate; he then folded me to his generous bosom, and saluting me as his ever destined adored Ethelinde, hoped my gentle heart felt no uneasy sensation

tion in reposing every future hope of happiness upon his care, his tenderness, and honor, vowed that all his life, and every pursuit should be devoted to the dear purpose of securing my felicity, in gratitude for the inestimable blessing of my heart. A blush of the purest pleasure suffused my cheeks in returning his embrace, while with delighted satisfaction, in tremulous accents I assured him, every tender wish was gratified, in the idea of being his for ever, and that I felt a virtuous pride in having the distinction of his name, and dearer claim of his protection.

By the direction of Mrs. Menville Lord St. Clair engaged apartments in the house of a neighbouring farmer, and I resided at the parsonage, passing for an orphan relation of the curate's.

In three successive Sundays the banns of marriage were published between Athwold Arundel and Ethelinde Martini; all was conducted with legal solemnity and decorum, and  
in

in proper time I became the happy bride of my beloved St. Clair. In the rapture he felt on my being his own beyond the possibility of dispute, his mother and the effects of her resentment were alike forgotten, and blest in each other, in humble retirement, contented we could have relinquished the ambitious world, and all its splendid allurements, but a little time convinced us we possessed neither the power nor inclination to make that decision for another, and gave a different turn to our ideas and intentions.

Langour and indisposition soon announced my pregnancy, then our own serene satisfaction received allay, and though regardless of distinctions ourselves, all the father was awakened, all the mother trembled, lest they should be blighted or obscured in our unknown unborn treasure.

Impressed with these ideas I subdued every selfish consideration, and prevailed on St. Clair to answer in person a letter from his mother

mother, conveyed through a private channel; and plead in excuse for his long absence having been on a shooting party in the north; our conflict was severe yet we conquered, and he having promised to return and cheer me in my approaching hour of anguish, by his endearing presence, we reluctantly tore ourselves from the arms of each other.

Oh! how changed did every thing appear in his absence! A gloom was added to the bleak aspect of the dreary season, and all creation wore a darkened hue to me; in my St. Clair's kind correspondence I found my dearest comfort, and in preparing for my infant stranger employed my time; in the benevolent Mr. Menville I experienced the cheering friend and improving companion, his conversation never failed to administer consolation, inspire hope, and raise my dejected spirits.

In his sister's society I felt little pleasure; in every point she was the reverse of her amiable

able brother, and nothing but his ideas of the claims her unprotected condition and infirm health had upon him could have enabled him to support her strange wayward humours, for she was peevish, discontented, and morose; most probably some early disappointment had chilled her gentler feelings, and planted the thorn of envy in a naturally good heart, for she sickened at the voice of pleasure, and frowned disapprobation at these innocent enjoyments she neither could nor would share; often her ill nature rendered forbearance difficult, yet in respect to her brother, and in consideration of her declining state, I repressed every retort, 'till provoked by my calmness she would lose all government of her passions and retire in frenzies which I fear hastened her dissolution.

At length I was blest with the return of my adoring St. Clair, and in a very few days after his arrival I presented him these little smiling cherubs, whom I have here past for my brother and sister. I cannot describe the  
triumph

triumph which glowed in the father's breast, and animated his manner when caressing the infants, they appeared to have heightened his tenderness for their mother, and for a while we were the happiest of human beings.

"Ah! thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,

"Too soon dejected, and too soon elate."

Soon indeed was our dream of happiness destroyed, soon our serenity was interrupted, and by means which gratitude intended should promote felicity, and give a testimony of regard.

During Lord St. Clair's residence with his mother, he had so warmly interested himself in favor of Mr. Menville, that her Ladyship either in remembrance of his services to her son, in respect to the late Lord's intention, or to be free from further importunity, promised to present him to the Rectory of Arundel, on the death of the incumbent, which  
happening

happening at this time, Mr. Menville was summoned to discharge its duties.

Methought a blush of inward reproach dyed his honest face, as he perused the letter which offered him the presentation, in reward for the zeal and care he had evinced for his pupil's welfare and interest, but conscious rectitude of heart, and intention, soon dispelled the uneasy sensation, when turning to us with a smile of benignity, he said his removal need not break up the little household, nor I change my residence until circumstances wore a more favorable aspect, as his sister would still preside at the parsonage, and be happy in my society. Poor woman!—Notwithstanding her apparent apathy to every thing, I believed she felt gratified in her brother's preferment, and promised herself a world of consequence in being sole directress of the humble abode; a consequence she only experienced in idea, for her disorder, which was a deep decline, made rapid and alarming progress, and the evening before that appointed for her brother's departure

parture, she closed the scene of existence, expiring in her brother's arms without a single struggle.

The day after that in which her cold remains were laid in hallowed ground, Mr. Menville was obliged to leave us, though with many an anxious thought for my future fate.

Dreary and forlorn as our solitude was now become, I would have remained in it, but my St. Clair would not hear of the proposition, but hastened to town in order to promote a plan, which he assured me would terminate all our uneasiness, and lead to the happiest purposes.

He soon returned, and with joyful exultation he informed me, that he had related my history to his sister, and confessed his attachment, though not his marriage, and that she was prepared to receive me with friendship and kindness as her humble companion, the only situation she had the power to offer, so  
totally

totally were all her actions restricted by her mother. "Though humiliating, my best life," continued he, "condescend to submit for the sake of your adoring husband; there you can engage the affection of a noble minded sister, there you will be secure from insult, and there we shall at least have the satisfaction of beholding each other, and I indulge a hope, that my Ethelinde's merit will attract even my mother's notice, and claim her regard, when she will no longer wonder, or blame her son, for being sensible to perfection."

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Though less sanguine in my expectations than St. Clair, deeming his judgment superior to my own, and to grant his wishes being my delight, I instantly prepared for my departure from the parsonage; on my arrival in town I placed my little darlings with a careful nurse, where I could visit them daily, and according to the directions of my St. Clair, arrived late in the evening at the magnificent mansion of his mother.